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ROMANCE

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The Tales of the New York Story Club

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The opportunity to see the elephant as he was forty years ago in this city is afforded to the readers of ROMANCE, as it was to Don Bobtail Fandango, by George William Curtis. It is not as a cicerone that Mr. Curtis is best known to this generation. This genial service the generation will regret after reading the following story, which we reprint by permission of the Harper Brothers.

SIX AND HALF-A-DOZEN.

WHEN my friend Don Bobtail said, "I wish to see the hippopotamus and marry an heiress," I naturally understood only one half of his remark. I flatter myself that we young men about town "who know the world," etc., also know very well what it is to marry an heiress. About the hippopotamus, however, I was not so sure; so I said simply:

"Your Excellency must remember that you are not in London."

"How, not in London?" replied he.

"Why, that we have no zoological exhibition here, no Regent's Park, and consequently no hippopotamus."

Don Bobtail Fandango mused a moment, then he continued:

"But have you not an idiom, *comme ça*, to see the hippopotamus?"

At that moment it occurred to me that the Don was struggling to express himself in an ordinary slang phrase, and wished to say—"see the elephant." But I did not immediately relieve his doubt. On the contrary, as I remembered that once in Monaco I was obliged to suspect him of a conspiracy with the beautiful Belli Occhi, by which I was the loser, I determined to have my revenge.

"Perhaps," said I, "you mean to say that you want to see the elephant."

"Precisely," replied the Don.

"What do you understand by the expression?" inquired I, as we strolled slowly along.

"Why, I suppose it means to study life. For instance, in Monaco, when you made the acquaintance of Belli Occhi, and frequented her rooms; and when we relieved our graver duties with an innocent turn at cards or the billiard table—then, I should say, if I understand the expression correctly—you saw the elephant in Monaco."

"And a prodigiously white elephant it was," returned I, as I recalled those days. "But do you know how the expression originated with us?"

"No, I do not," said the Don; "it must be a curious story."

"Not at all," said I, "it's very simple. You know, although we have no Regent's Park, nor Zoological Garden, we do have a menagerie occasionally, and Bangum sometimes entertains the town with a procession of elephants. Well, two or three years ago there was a very large and fine animal imported from Siam expressly for the great Bangum. It came to England by the overland mail, and, as you will remember, a steamer was especially detailed to bring it to America. Mr. Bangum endeavored to persuade the Secretary of the Navy to dispatch a seventy-four for the purpose. But the secretary, an illiberal and obstinate official, decidedly refused. Upon which the caustic Bangum caused a wax figure to be made, bearing a strong resemblance to the secretary, which he placed in his admirable collection, hung the girdle with the scalps of children, and wrote under it in large red letters, 'The Modern Nero.' This figure was the chief ornament of the famous Chamber of Horrors in Bangum's Museum; and I have no doubt, the secretary would have resigned, had he known it. The elephant arrived in due season; was exhibited at the menagerie, and the town flocked to see it. Suddenly it disappeared. No one knew what had become of it. It was talked about on 'Change. The newspapers had eloquent leaders about it. The magazines discussed the subject, with illustrations, and one article in particular, 'Have we an elephant among us?'—excited

great attention. Still the elephant did not appear. 'Such an animal could not disappear without somebody's knowing about it,' said one astute journal. 'It was too large for any mischievous boy to carry off in his pocket, or any wily nursery-maid in her reticule,' said another, a conservative and safe evening print, planting itself boldly upon facts."

"That was a very correct view of the case," hinted Don Bobtail.

"Well, the excitement presently subsided, or rather shifted to the later novelty of the great Bangum's 'the affectionate anaconda,' which was warranted to squeeze the most delicate infant without suffocation: a fact not so remarkable when we reflect that it was constructed of india rubber and wool. An intelligent and gratified public swarmed to the soirées of the anaconda, and the poor elephant was forgotten. What do you think had become of it?"

"Really I can't imagine," replied my friend the Spanish embassador.

"Well," resumed I, pausing a moment to cough, and wondering how I should dispose of my subject, "I will tell you. This marvellous disappearance occurred several years since; but a few weeks afterward, as I was passing down Broadway I was overtaken by Mr. Bangum.

"'Good morning,' said he; 'have you seen my anaconda?'

"'No, not yet; I was just going.'

"'Most marvellous thing, sir; something truly surprising. Dr. Gerund and his school visited it yesterday: every one of the scholars was squeezed by the anaconda, and without suffocating results. A truly affectionate animal, sir—schools half price.'

"'Mr. Bangum,' said I, looking at him mysteriously, and speaking in a low voice, 'where is the elephant?'

"'Do you wish to see the elephant, sir?' said he after a moment, narrowly watching me; and I confess a thrill, as I recall the first time those celebrated words fell upon my ear.

"'Are we not all longing to know what has become of it?' returned I.

"'Very well You know how much I esteem you. You know how dearly I prized that animal—by the bye, have you seen 'the modern Nero?'—judge how horror-stricken I was when I discovered that certain fiends in human shape had been endeavoring to poison my innocent! I took measures instantly and had him privately removed—'

"'Where?' eagerly demanded I.

"'Softly, my impetuous young friend,' returned the benign Bangum; 'gently over the stones. My dear elephant is now in the attic of the Astor House, where, in a tropical atmosphere of 250° Fahrenheit, and browsing upon aloes and the fruit of the banyan-tree imported by me expressly for his eating, he drags out a confined but, I trust, tolerably contented existence.'

"The great Bangum applied his handkerchief to his eyes.

"'There, sir, is the inestimable animal to be seen—admittance, under the peculiar circumstances, one dollar.'

"And the face of my friend was again buried in his handkerchief.

"I, of course, instantly visited the recluse, upon the terms suggested by Bangum, and I found that his disclosure had not been strictly confidential, but was shared by most other young men about town. The malicious whispered that the fiends in human shape who wished to destroy the innocent animal were entirely fancy sketches of Bangum's, who found he could 'realize' more by creating 'peculiar circumstances,' under which the admittance should be one dollar. But the joke was so good that it soon became town-talk, and men asked each other, 'Have you seen the elephant?' as naturally as they ask, 'Have you heard Alboni?'"

"That, then, is the origin of this famous expression?" said his Excellency, with an air of deep thought.

"It is, indeed," replied I, with an air of profound sincerity.

"But, my dear friend," continued Don Bobtail, "you have not mentioned one fact: is the elephant still visible?"

"Certainly," replied I.

"And visitors are admitted?"

"Of course: admittance, under the peculiar circumstances, one dollar."

"So there is no trouble about getting in?"

"Why, yes," answered I; "I ought to say that the clerks in the office have been so much bothered by applications to visit the attic, that they undertake to laugh now at the idea of having an animal in the attic. That is natural, for if it should be discovered that such a guest was entertained in the house, it might drive other guests away."

"It's very odd that none of the boarders in the house have discovered it," said my friend Fandango.

"They came very near finding it out once. One summer morning, Mrs. Mallows, a young bride from the country, was sitting at her open window in the room directly under that of the great unknown. She was reading Mr. James's last new novel, and nibbling at some cake that lay in a plate upon a table by the window; when, suddenly, she said, just as she was in the most interesting part of the book—(that, you remember, where the younger of the two horsemen dismounts at the top of the hill)—a huge, black monster, like a snake, came twirling and twisting in at the window, and after wriggling a moment in the air, pounced upon the sponge cake and disappeared, while she fell fainting upon the floor. It was the trunk of the elephant which had been dispatched upon a foraging tour, and was well pleased to find delectable sponge-cake ready set out at the window. There was great investigation and excitement; but as usual in such cases, the investigators knew where the difficulty was, and naturally applied themselves to every point but that. They took care, however, to secure the windows of the elephant's room so that they could not be opened."

"And he is still in the attic of the Astor House?"

"Infallibly," said I; "but they will deny it at the office."

"And he lives in an atmosphere of 250° Fahrenheit, and browses upon aloes and the fruit of the banyan tree?"

"Exactly so, unless Mr. Bangum is a deceiver."

"Very well," said the Spanish embassador, "I will undertake to see the elephant. Good morning. By the bye, remember Delmonico's at five."

"Trust me. Good morning."

And I parted with my distinguished friend, whom I had thus put upon a false scent. But was it anything more than a fair revenge for the little trick he played upon me at the masked ball in Monaco, on occasion of the King's fête? The circumstances, you remember, were these: The Polish Count Icthyosaurowski had arrived at the capital just in time for the entertainment—that is, a day or two before. I was then very intimate with Belli Occhi, and was not favorably disposed, of course, toward any new-comers who had the audacity to unite beauty and wealth with novelty. So, on the first evening of the Count's arrival, as I was walking with the Signora Occhi in the garden of the palace, and exchanging occasional nods with the king, who was smoking at the dining-room window of the palace (for, like most of my countrymen, I was on intimate terms with the royal family), I said to her:

"*Cara Belli*, I don't believe in Polish counts; and if I really thought that Icthyosaurowski had any nose under that mat of hair which overspreads his face, I think I should pull it."

"Fie!" said the beautiful Occhi, "how can you speak so of a gentleman who likes me?"

And the beautiful Belli Occhi blushed as she spoke, while I resolved to go down upon my knees the moment we got off the gravel-walk, and swear eternal fidelity. But before we came to a soft place, the king threw away the stump of his cigar, and beckoned me to approach. I obeyed the royal summons.

"Slave," said the king, biting off the end of a fresh cigar, "give me a light."

I produced a match and retired. My fair companion was plucking camelias, and watching the birds of paradise, as I returned. I rallied her gracefully upon her pensiveness, and she smiled languidly a smile that pierced my heart, for it seemed to indicate that her thoughts were elsewhere.

"Is Icthyosaurowski rich?" she asked, at length.

"He is the richest of Polish noblemen!" said I, with a bitter sneer. "At least, I know he has a letter for fifty thousand francs upon Scrueini, the court banker."

I had taken care to ascertain this fact immediately upon the count's arrival; for, upon consulting my own account with Scrueini, I had found it in a very unsatisfactory state—and, as I had formerly met wandering Polish gentlemen who did not object to a little turn at cards, I was quite confident I could persuade the new arrival to play a very little, just—for my advantage. I, in fact, stripling though I was, had not been intimate with Don Bob for nothing, and looked upon Count Icthyosaurowski's small sum as already transferred to my account.

"Indeed," replied my friend, with an air of great interest, when I mentioned the fact of the money. And she immediately became more affectionate than ever. As we reached the garden-gate, she said to me:

"We meet to-morrow at the ball?"

"Yes; but not before?"

"*Non è possibile:* I must keep myself fresh for the evening."

We parted. But I did not sleep until I had expended a few hundred francs in a serenade beneath her adored windows.

The next morning I received a note from my darling Belli, as follows:

"Most ingenuous youth: I shall wear to-night a pink domino, with black fringe; and a bleeding heart embroidered upon the back—emblematic of my devotion to you, unworthy, but too fondly dear, Giovanni."

Did I wait with impatience for the ball! Did Hero long for Leander?

During the morning Don Bobtail came in. "I'm not well, to-day," said he. "I shall be unable to attend the ball to-night."

I was so delighted at the withdrawal of my rival, that I sympathized with him most sincerely. I regretted that he should lose so handsome a sight.

"However, Don Bob," said I, "of course, you would not wish to peril your precious health, by any improper exposure, which this would certainly be. I think you do very right to stay away."

"I'm glad you think so," said he; and he took leave.

The evening came. Ah! precious evenings of royal splendor and festivity, whose purple light illuminates the memory of us "travelled" youth, how all too rapidly ye passed!

The streets of the town of Monaco were silent for three hours after dark. It was like that famous silence, which, as is so frequently stated in poems of an elevated character, precedes the storm. Monaco was dressing for the masked ball. Preternatural silence was the proper harbinger of the mystery of the masks. Suddenly, a noise was heard. It was the first carriage, bearing its lovely burden to the palace. In half an hour the streets of Monaco were noisy with the constant rattling of wheels. Monaco was proceeding to the masked ball. Fancy, in the most elegant of those carriages, dearest reader, a youth armed for victory, in the striking and unusual costume of a *débardeur*. Since those days, it is a custom much in vogue at Saratoga and elsewhere, on similar occasions: and with the utmost propriety, for a *débardeur* is a heavy porter; and the figures of the youths who assume that character, and the satin ribbons and full silk appointments of the dress, are strictly suggestive of heavy porters. That *débardeur* was the present author. His carriage fell into file, and presently I reached the door, and, as I surveyed myself in the dressing-room, I confess—and I hope you will believe it—I thought less of myself than of the pink dom-

ino, embroidered with the bleeding heart. I should attach myself to that only. I would declare, this very night, the ardor of my passion. And it was a consolation to me to reflect that the curious eyes of the excellent Spanish embassador would be closed in refreshing sleep, and would not be watching me as they were wont.

I entered the great saloon, and made my obeisance to Majesty, who, as is usual with kings, sat upon a throne, with a crown on his head, a sceptre in his right hand, and a globe in the left. Then I passed on to discover the domino I sought. An Italian masquerade, or *festina*, is the only occasion of the kind that deserves the name; for it is really a mask. Everybody is concealed under a long black domino, with a black mask over the face; and no woman could tell her lover, even, except by some sign, previously arranged, or by instinct.* In France and Germany, and other half-civilized countries, the men are not allowed to mask at all; and the women wear some fancy domino, which distinguishes them all the evening, so that, when once discovered, there is no escape for them. Where all are shrouded in black every one is constantly plunging into obscurity. The universal blackness is a cloud, into which you may retire, if discovered; and when you reappear, it shall be with as much mystery as ever.

Naturally the caustic reader will now ask in a trenchant way, "Why, if you are so fond of the uniform blackness, did you go in the ridiculous costume of a *débardeur*, and your female friend in that pink domino?"

I will tell you why. It was because I did not attend the fête for the fun of a general intrigue, but to meet one particular person and to remain constantly with that one, and—if you will insist upon it—I did not feel quite sure that my beautiful Belli would not leave me to languish in ignorance and accost a hundred masks in vain, if we did not come to a clear understanding before we went. She was fond of jokes, and if she saw me

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* The prearranged sign is, perhaps, the sure method.—*Ed.*

hopelessly hunting through the crowd to find her, I am not entirely sure that she would have relieved my suspense by betraying herself. However, that is none of the reader's affair. We had agreed to be known to each other, and within a few minutes I saw the pink domino, the only one in the room, while I was the only strictly fancy costume.

I rapidly gained the side of the pink figure who quietly awaited me. How large and queenly it looked in the ample domino! How the adored Belli stood eminent among the black figures that glided around her. Everybody was speaking in the shrill treble peculiar to an Italian masquerade, and which confounds all voices as effectually as the black dominos confuse the figures. It is a habit taken from Pulcinello, who always speaks in that tone, and in Paganini's "Carnival of Venice," this high, sharp squeak is distinctly heard in the violin, and is one of the most characteristic points of the composition, full of local color, to borrow a phrase of the court painter at Monaco, Il Cavaliere Agro Dolce. During the masques of the Carnival all Italy squeaks in that shrill tone.

"At last," said the pink domino, but of course in that peculiar voice.

"I am here, divinest Occhi," returned I in a whisper.

She moved away, and I followed her. She passed out of the saloon to the balcony that hung over the garden. The night was exquisite. It was May and moonlight. I followed the mysterious pink domino out of the saloon, and smiled when a black mask came close to my face and whispered, "Beware." I laughed aloud when another murmured "*Poverino.*" I was a "poor fellow," was I? I, the favored friend of Belli Occhi?—and I laughed again in gentle scorn.

We moved away from the saloon to the end of the balcony, and then in a more natural voice, yet still somewhat disguised, Belli said:

"Why don't you believe in Polish counts?"

"Because they are usually impostors."

"But not always, and they are often handsome."

Now, was it natural that I should hear from Belli's lips that other men were handsome, without a pang?

"They are not handsome in my opinion," said I coldly.

"Dear Giovannino, don't be jealous. I think you are much handsomer than Icthyosaurowski."

It was my darling Belli who said it, and I kissed the pink domino.

"But tell me," continued she, "do you know him?"

"No."

"Do you know anything about him?"

"Nothing, except that he was at the Casino last evening after I left you."

"What did he do?"

"Well—a little *rouge et noir*."

"Did he lose anything?"

"A trifle."

"And paid?"

"On the spot."

"Did you say that he had a letter for fifty thousand francs upon Scrueini?"

"I know it."

"Dear Giovannino."

The reader will easily imagine my sensations, as the novels have it, during this staccato conversation. As soon as I felt sure of my voice, I said, in the coldest way:

"Signora Belli Occhi, may I be permitted to know the reason of this interesting inquiry on your part into the affairs of Count Icthyosaurowski?"

"Why, certainly. You know my grandmother was a Russian of the Plesiosaurosikoff family, who married an Icthyosaurowski, and from the beauty, and family appearance, and manner of this count, I was persuaded he was my cousin, and now I am convinced of it from what you have told me. You are not angry, *caro mio*, because I ask about my cousin, are you?"

How could I be? I pressed her hand, and begged a thousand pardons. The fact is that I was not aware of the relationship between the families of Occhi and the

Icthyosaurowski. That, of course, explained everything.

"Come to me in ten minutes in the banqueting room," said Belli, as she left me. I remained upon the balcony, and drawing out my tablets wrote an impromptu sonnet by moonlight upon Love. It was afterward considered very pretty, and I had it translated into sixty-three languages during the "World's Fair" in London, under the editorial supervision of my friend, Farquhar Tupper.

The ten minutes ended, and I pushed through the crowd into the banqueting-hall. I sought the pink domino in vain. I went into every corner: I waited: I wondered: I underwent awful fears. What could have happened? Had Belli been taken suddenly ill? Had she fallen in the garden? Was her watch slow? Had she had a fit? I was agonized. I ran to the usher:

"Have you seen a pink domino within a quarter of an hour?"

"No, *ill'mo Signore*, illustrious sir," responded the usher.

I determined to find her. I would rush out of the palace, *débardeur* though I was, and discover the reason of this awful absence. I leaped down the front stairs of the palace. I was just running out of the door, as I thought, when I found that I had missed my way, and rushed into a cabinet, where, to my amazement, I beheld my excellent friend the Spanish embassador and Count Icthyosaurowski with cards in their hands and a table before them covered with gold. I heard only the end of a sentence as I burst in upon them:

"Forty thousand francs," said the count, at the same moment handing Don Bob a paper, which that distinguished diplomatist thrust into his pocket as I appeared.

"Ah! good evening," said he, calmly, as I stared at the table, the gold, and the men. "I was much too unwell to undergo the excitement upstairs, so my friend here—Count Icthyosaurowski, Mr. Smytthe—and I have been having a quiet turn at cards."

I still stared, kind reader, for, covering the back of

the chair in which Don Bobtail sat, I observed a pink domino, which I seized, turned over, and disclosed a bleeding heart embroidered upon the back.

"What does this mean?" gasped I.

"Oh! yes," said the Don, placidly, "certainly, I forgot—our friend, the Signora Belli, left it here a few moments since. She said she should return for it in ten minutes, as she had an appointment in the banqueting hall. She ought to be here now. Count, it's yours, I believe."

I was transfixed with this coolness; but determined to search the matter thoroughly, I opened the door to run to the house of the fair Belli, when, lo! she was coming in as I hurried out.

"Excuse me, dear Giovanni," cried she. "I fear I am a little late, but I unfortunately tripped as I was coming back to our appointment, and was compelled to run home and change my dress. Come, Don Bob, give me my domino—and, *caro mio*, *Giovannino*, let's go up to supper."

I fell upon my knee and kissed her hand, and implored her forgiveness. For shall I tell what ridiculous and injurious suspicion floated through my mind, as I had seen Don Bob, and the count, and the pink domino. Yes, I will tell it, to my shame. I thought, then, that Don Bob, who was fond of cards, and made a good deal of money in an honorable way, by turning them over with other gentlemen, had heard from Belli what I had said of the fifty thousand francs of the count—that she and he had arranged the pink domino, with the understanding that he was to wear it during the early part of the evening, I, meanwhile, supposing from what he said that he would not come—that he should then ascertain for himself whether the count ever played, and then, when he had learned all he wished to know, I was base enough for a moment to believe he meant to engage the count at cards and win his money, while Belli came in, took the domino, and fulfilled the appointment with me in the banqueting hall. I blush to think I could ever judge my fellow men and women so harshly.

It was odd that the count left Monaco suddenly, and that Don Bobtail gave a series of very handsome suppers immediately after his departure, at which Signora Belli was resplendent with a great many new jewels and dresses—and it was also singular that for several weeks afterward I could never obtain a private interview with that beautiful woman, although, during the same time, I frequently saw her driving *tête-à-tête* with the Spanish embassador, who had purchased a noble pair of horses.

In fact, although, of course, I acquitted my friend of any double-dealing, yet I was annoyed, and a little suspicious, and determined that when I had him on my native heather I would repay him in some innocent way. Hence the elephant humbug, of which I was to hear the result when we met at Delmonico's for dinner.

Punctually at five o'clock I entered Delmonico's dining-room, and saw the Spanish embassador quietly reading the evening paper.

"In good time," said he—"oysters?"

"Yes—a good beginning."

We ate our oysters and drank our Chablis. We chatted pleasantly of a dozen things. We laid plans for the evening. We reached the pleasant days of Monaco.

"I should be glad to have you there again," said Don Bob, in rather an intense manner.

"Would you show me the elephant?" said I.

Don Bobtail Fandango, the Spanish embassador, put down a bit of quail he was just raising upon his fork. He looked at me. I raised my glass, fixed my eye on his, smiled, and said:

"Don, here's the health of Count Icthyosaurowski!"

We shouted together.

"Well done!" said he, "well done! I forgive you."

"Tell me about it," said I, as the Don ordered cigars and coffee.

"I went to the Astor House, as you directed me," commenced my distinguished friend calmly, "and sauntering toward the desk, I said to the clerk, in an undertone, 'I want to see the elephant!' The clerk said nothing, and went on writing. From what you told me, I

expected such a reception, so I said again, 'I wish to see the elephant.' The clerk raised his eyes, looked at me and said, 'Please not be joking here, sir;' then fell to writing again. I stepped a little nearer, and to show him that it was useless to try to fool me, since I knew very well what I was saying, I whispered in his ear, 'I want to see the elephant that you keep in the attic in an atmosphere of 250° of Fahrenheit, and which browses upon aloes and the fruit of the banyan tree.' The clerk started, as if he thought I was about to seize him by the throat, and took up a hammer that lay by him, at the same time looking at me in a very alarmed manner, as if he supposed I were crazy. But I smiled encouragingly, and he apparently took courage. 'Sir,' said he, 'there is no such thing in the house; somebody has been imposing upon you, for I see by your accent that you are a foreigner.'

"'My young friend,' said I, 'all that is very useless with me. I know perfectly well that it is your habit to deny the fact of the animal's being in the house, and it is a wise thing on your part, because it serves to satisfy the ignorant. But you see that I know all about it, and you might as well have me shown up directly. I am fully aware of all the circumstances under which Mr. Bangum has put the animal here; and here is the fee, which,' added I, emphatically, '*under the peculiar circumstances*, I know to be one dollar.'

"'You're either mad or drunk,' said the clerk to me, 'and if you don't march, I'll call the porter to put you out.'

"This was rather too strong; and I said simply, 'Very well, young man, I shall expose you.' Then turning to the groups of gentlemen in the office, I said, 'You may not be aware, gentlemen, that there is an elephant kept in the attic of this house, in an atmosphere of 250° of Fahrenheit, which feeds upon aloes and the fruit of the banyan. For peculiar reasons, Mr. Bangum, who owns the animal, has put the price of admission at one dollar: but there is such an incessant demand to see him, that the clerks of the house, who are not at all interested in the

matter, sometimes quite forget their good manners, when civilly requested to show strangers the elephant.'

"At this point there was a loud burst of laughter, in which I heartily joined.

"'You see, gentlemen,' said I, 'although a foreigner, I yet know a few things.'

"'But there is one thing you don't know, it seems,' said a tall, large gentleman, with smiling wrinkles around his eyes.

"'What is that?' inquired I.

"'You don't seem to have learned that the elephant has been transferred to the care of the surrogate.'

"'Certainly,' broke in the clerk, with twinkling eyes; 'to the care of the surrogate. We found it difficult to keep up an atmosphere higher than 245° Fahrenheit.'

"'But what is the surrogate?' inquired I; 'for, as I said, gentlemen, I am a stranger.'

"'The surrogate, sir,' said the large gentleman, 'is an officer of very various duties, the chief of which are the care of the elephant and ringing the City Hall bell.'

"'A very useful citizen, then, sir,' answered I.

"'And a very worthy, sir,' answered the large gentleman.

"'He has, then, the elephant in charge at the present time?' inquired I, respectfully.

"'He has, sir; and you probably are not aware where his office is?'

"I confessed my ignorance, and my large friend continued:

"'The office of the surrogate, sir, is in the cupola of the City Hall. He has it there for convenience to the bell.'

"'The elephant, then, is at present in the cupola of the City Hall?'

"'Precisely; and I have no doubt that the surrogate will have the greatest pleasure in showing him to you.'

"'Is the animal perfectly quiet and harmless?' asked I.

"'Oh, perfectly! To be sure he occasionally strays out of the office, and gets in among the clock-works, which makes some confusion. The clock stops for a few

days—perhaps the hands fall off, or something of that kind. But when the elephant is once extricated from the machinery, things get on as smoothly as ever. He made a singular mistake one day, however.'

"'What was that?'

"'Oh, it was simple and natural enough. The surrogate was busily writing at the table, with his back to the elephant, who, in a momentary absence of mind, alarmingly applied his trunk to the bald head of that functionary, evidently taking it for a remarkably fine specimen of the fruit of the banyan-tree. However, the surrogate turned suddenly round, and the elephant perceived his mistake.'

"'That was unfortunate,' said I.

"'Quite so,' said the large gentleman.

"I bade the gentleman a courteous adieu, and ran across Broadway to the Park. As I went toward the City Hall, I looked up toward the cupola to see if I could detect any sign of the animal which I was now determined to see, as a point of honor. I thought that, possibly, his trunk might be sportively twirling in the air, or his tusks thrust through some crevice. But I detected nothing. Running rapidly up the stairs, I climbed toward the cupola until I could go no further. Then I knocked at a door. A very gruff voice saluted me through the key-hole.

"'What is it?'

"'I want to see the elephant,' whispered I, through the same orifice.

"'Go to —— Wall Street,' thundered back the gruff voice.

"'I'll give you two dollars if you'll let me in,' continued I—nor could I help adding: 'Mr. Surrogate, this is hardly the treatment I anticipated.'

"'I advise you to cut, or you'll be apt not to sleep soft to-night,' was all the answer that I received; and I confess it was rather humiliating to my diplomatic and Spanish dignity. I reflected a moment; then said:

"'Sir, are you not the surrogate?'

"'No,' roared the voice, 'I'm the bell-ringer.'

"But, sir, I understood that you combined with those duties the charge of the elephant?'

"Upon that there came such an oath, that I am still astonished how a phrase of such dimensions could squeeze through so small a key-hole. It fairly blew me downstairs. When I gained the Park, I looked at the clock, and saw that it was half-past four. I devoted the next twenty minutes to wandering about that tranquil and shady retreat, and, far from the city's hum, collected my thoughts, and convicted myself of being the victim of an amiable deceit. I forgive you, my young friend, for I am aware that my conduct toward you has not been always perfectly transparent. I conceive that I have truly seen the elephant, under your auspices—if to see that animal means to cut the eye-teeth (doubtless from some occult allusion to his tusks). Will you now undertake to satisfy my other desire—that of marrying an heiress?"

"I certainly will," answered I.

"Well, then," said Don Bobtail, "let us drink, in an extra bottle, forgiveness all round, and the health of the Count Icthyosaurowski."

"And the surrogate?" asked I.

The Spanish embassador laughed pleasantly; and finishing our cigars, we strolled quietly up Broadway to the opera.

The following story is swift and brief, but it contains the two supreme elements of human interest—love and death. It is an original story, and was written by Hal Reid for ROMANCE.

HIS MOTHER.

A WAIL.

A long, low, mournful sound which reverberates through the rocks and rugged trees of mountainous Arkansas.

By the side of the rocky pathway is a cabin, and away across the range, just emerging over the tops of the pines, the August moon is rising.

A thin blue line of smoke is seen a little further on and up the mountain, curling lazily upward.

From the low cabin door comes a woman, an old, thin woman; her face is like leather, and the deep furrows of age and care are deeply impressed upon it.

Again from out the stillness comes that awful sound.

"Thet be a dorg a-howlin'," she mutters. "Thet be bad luck. Ther be trubble a-comin'."

"Hayer! Boze! Hayer!" she calls, and from the tangled underbrush skulks a lean, miserable, yellow dog, and with tail between his legs and hanging head he crawls slowly toward her.

He stops.

And again that dreadful, awful howl goes echoing across the range.

Like a flash she pounces upon him, and with her hard, bony hand, mercilessly beats him.

"Cuss ye! shet! will ye? Do ye want t' bring them gov'ment spies a-down on us? G'win th' house. G'win!"

Groveling, trembling, the dog skulks into the cabin.

She stands a moment and looks toward the curling smoke, and then turns abruptly into the cabin door. Once within, she reaches into a corner and brings forth a rifle. Examining it carefully, she sets it just inside the doorway.

She stands a moment irresolute, and then goes to where the rifle stands.

"You never howl," she mumbles, as she caresses the polished barrel; "but ye bark, my beauty, 'en bite, too. Let 'em come. I be a-ready," and she sits down upon a chair near by.

Silence.

Save now and then the deep notes of a pond-frog breaks the stillness.

"Whoo-oo! whoo-oo! whoo-oo!"

'Owls," she mutters.

"Whoo-ee! whoo-ee! whoo-ee!"

Like an athlete, she springs to her feet. "Thet be sum one ov' us." She goes to the door and placing her yellow, shrivelled hand to one side of her mouth:

"Ee-whoo! ee-whoo! ee-whoo!" goes through the dank woods.

A moment.

And then around the cabin, closely hugging the log walls, comes

A woman.

She steps within, her pale yellow hair hanging about her thin neck.

"They be a-comin' up the mountain," she says breathlessly.

"Who be a-comin'?" asks the elder woman, in haste.

"Th' gov'ment spies."

"Cuss thet Boze! It a-wuz him es did et."

She stops and listens intently.

"Halt!"

From the rocks below comes the command, but faintly sounding on the night air.

"They a-be after Dave," says the younger one. "They a-be after my Dave—your Dave, our Dave."

The thin old lips compress, and the yellow face is in an instant as hard as flint.

She moves quickly to the candle and blows it out.

"How d'ye know?"

"They cum t' our cabin fer water, 'n I heerd 'em talkin 'en I runned up the short way."

"Listen!"

"Dismount. We foot it from here."

"Mag, kin ye warn 'em up et the still?"

"I be a-feerd, Miss Jenkins."

"A-feerd?—afeerd? en you a-wantin' to be Davie's woman? Suke Thomas wud a-go."

"I be a-goin'. Wait!"

And the younger woman throws a shawl over her head and steps out into the night.

On, on she goes over the rocks like a frightened deer.

"The a-moon be a-with us," mutters the old woman, as she watches the other.

A cloud rolls away; a momentary gleam of moonlight; a figure in bold relief standing upon a rock.

Whing-r-r-r-r-r!!! A bullet speeds its way.

A scream.

A poor tottering form.

A second.

And the girl's lifeless body rolls down the reddened rocks.

Unmoved, like a steel statue, stands the old woman in the door. She is watching the smoke curling upward, beyond. Thinner it grows and thinner.

It is gone.

"Mag be ded," she mutters; "en Dave'll be a-mighty lonesum. But they's warned."

She listens.

Not a sound. Ten minutes, half an hour, an hour—two—and no sound.

"Cuss 'em, they's fooled agin."

Then from around the house, silently, like ghosts, come the forms of a dozen men; and between two of them, shackled hand and foot is—

Dave!

She utters no sound.

"They've a-got me, Mam," he says. "I a-be the only one tuck. They a-wuddent a-got me unly I a-went t' see Mag, you a-kno' she a-loved me; en, en—"

His throat closed, and a tear splashed at his feet.

"Dave," she says, "you've a-always bin ust to the mountain, son, hain't ye? En they a-be goin' to take you to jail. Ha'n't ye, spies?"

"Yes; he's good for a life sentence, for murdering a government officer," answers the officer in charge.

"Then a-good-by, Davie. Kiss Mam."

The bony arms are about his neck, the thin lips press his own.

"March!" commands the officer.

"A-wait a minnit. I've a-got sumthin' inside fer Davie t' take along."

"Halt!"

She turns and reaches inside the door. Like a flash the rifle is levelled, and in an instant it cracks.

"Mother!"

And Dave, with a convulsive clutch at the air, falls dead at her feet.

Like a rock she stands.

"You kin a-have my Davie now. A-take him an' go."

Horrified, unmanned, the officers stand.

"Right about face—forward—march!!"

She stands and watches them disappear, and when the last sound has died away she sinks beside him.

"Don't a-be mad at Mam, honey. Don't stare at a-me like a-that. I a-be your Mam, en I a-nussed ye, en I ust to a-give you goards en a-sich t' play with; en a-when yed cut yer finger I'd a-tie it up fer ye. Oh, Davie, Davie, don't a-be mad with me. D'ye a-mind, baby, when ye a-stumped yer toe, I tied bacon on it fer ye. Ye never cud a-lived thar, son, en' that place, never."

From the cabin skulks the dog.

Her head is upon the dead man's breast, and she is aroused by the "lap, lap, lap," as the hungry brute licks up the warm blood.

"Cuss ye! Et wuz a-you!" she shrieks.

And, with superhuman strength, she grabs the dog by the hind legs and dashes him to death.

Morning came, and with it the government officers.

That evening, when the sun sank behind the rugged rocks, its last rays tipped three rock-covered graves.

For they had found her dead beside the body of her Dave.

The unregenerate, who find more satisfaction in the personal administration of justice than in the regular processes of the law, will enjoy the following story, which was written by that wise man and story teller, Grant Allen, for *The Strand* magazine.

A PRISONER OF ASSIOUT

It was a sultry December day at Medinet Habu. Gray haze spread dim over the rocks in the desert. The arid red mountains twinkled and winked through the heated air. I was weary with climbing the great dry ridge from the tombs of the Kings. I sat on the broken arm of a shattered granite Ramesis. My legs dangled over the side of that colossal fragment. In front of me vast colonnades stood out clear and distinct against the hot, white sky. Beyond lay bare hills; in the distance to the left, the muddy Nile, amid green fields, gleamed like a thin silver thread in the sunlight.

A native, in a single dirty garment, sat sunning himself on a headless sphynx hard by. He was carving a watermelon with his knife—thick, red, ripe, juicy. I eyed it hard. With a gesture of Oriental politeness, he offered me a slice. It was too tempting to refuse, that baking hot day, in that rainless land, though I knew acceptance meant ten times its worth in the end in backsheesh.

"Arabi?" I asked inquiringly of my Egyptian friend, which is, being interpreted, "Are you a Mussulman?"

He shook his head firmly, and pointed with many nods to the tiny blue cross tattooed on his left wrist. "Nusrani," he answered, with a look of some pride. I smiled my acquiescence. He was a Nazarene, a Christian.

In a few minutes' time we had fallen into close talk of Egypt, past and present; the bad old days; the British occupation; the effect of strong government on the condition of the fellahin. To the Christian popu-

lation of the Nile valley, of course, the advent of the English has been a social revolution. For ages downtrodden, oppressed, despised, these Coptic schismatics at last find themselves suddenly, in the ends of the earth, co-religionists with the new ruling class in the country, and able to boast themselves in many ways over their old Moslem masters.

I speak but little colloquial Arabic myself, though I understand it with ease when it is spoken, so the conversation between us was necessarily somewhat one-sided. But my Egyptian friend soon grew voluble enough for two, and the sight of the piastres laid in his dusky palm loosed the strings of his tongue to such an alarming extent that I began to wonder, before long, whether I should ever get back again to the Luxor Hotel in time for dinner.

"Ah, yes, excellency," my Copt said slowly, when I asked him at last about the administration of justice under Ismail's rule, "things were different then, before the English came, as Allah willed it. It was stick, stick, stick, every month of the year. No prayers availed; we were beaten for everything. If a fellah didn't pay his taxes when crops were bad, he was lashed till he found them; if he was a Christian, and offended the Moslem official, he was stripped to the skin, and ruthlessly bastinadoed. And then, for any insubordination, it was death outright—hanging or beheading, slash, so, with a scimetar." And my companion brought his hand round in a whirl with swishing force, as if he were decapitating some unseen criminal on the bare sand before him.

"The innocent must often have been punished with the guilty," I remarked in my best Arabic, looking vaguely across at him.

"Ah, yes," he assented, smiling. "So Allah ordained. But sometimes, even then, the saints were kind; we got off unexpectedly. I could tell you a strange story that once happened to myself." His eyes twinkled hard. "It was a curious adventure," he went on; "the effendi might like, perhaps, to hear it. I was

condemned to death, and all but executed. It shows the wonderful ways of Allah."

These Coptic Christians, indeed, speaking Arabic as they do, and living so constantly among a Mussulman population, have imbibed many Mahometan traits of thought, beside the mere accident of language, such as speaking of the Christian God as Allah. Fatalism has taken as strong a hold of their minds as Islam itself. "Say on," I answered lightly, drawing a cigarette from my case. "A story is always of interest to me, my friend. It brings grist to the mill. I am a man of the pen. I write down in books all the strange things that are told me."

My Egyptian smiled again. "Then this tale of mine," he said, showing all his white teeth, and brushing away the flies from his sore eye as he spoke, "should be worth your money, for it's as strange as any of the Thousand and One Nights men tell for hire at Cairo. It happened to me near Assiout, in Ismail's day. I was a bold young man then — too bold for Egypt. My father had a piece of ground by the riverside that was afterward taken from us by Ismail for the Daira.

"In our village lived a Sheikh, a very hard man; a Mussulman, an Arab, a descendant of the Prophet. He was the greatest Sheikh for miles and miles around. He had a large white house, with green blinds to the windows, while all the rest of us in his government lived in mud-built huts, round and low like beehives. He had date palms, very many; and doums, and doura patches. Camels were his, and buffaloes, and asses and cows; 'twas a very rich man; oh, so rich and powerful. When he went forth to town he rode on a great white mule. And he had a harem, too; three wives of his own, who were beautiful as the day—so girls who had seen them said, for as for us we saw them not—plump women every one of them, as the Khedive's at Cairo, with eyes like a gazelle's, marked round with kohl, and their nails stained red every day with henna. All the world said the Sheikh was a happy man, for he

had the finest dates of the country to eat, and servants and camels in plenty to do his bidding.

"Now, there was a girl in our village, a Nusrani like me, a beautiful young girl; and her name was Laila. Her eyes were like those of that child there—Zanobi—who carries the effendi's water-gourd on her head, and her cheeks were round and soft as a grape after the inundation. I meant to wed her; and she liked me well. In the evening we sat and talked together under the whispering palm trees. But when the time drew near for me to marry her, and I had arranged with her parents, there came a message from the Sheikh. He had seen the girl by the river as she went down to draw water with her face unveiled, and, though she was a Nusrani, she fired his soul, and he wished to take her away from me to put her into his harem.

"When I heard that word I tore my clothes in my rage, and, all Christian that I was, and of no account with the Moslems, I went up to the Sheikh's house in a very white anger, and I fell on my face and asked leave to see him.

"The Sheikh sat in his courtyard, inside his house, and gave audience to all men, after the fashion of Islam. I entered and spoke to him. 'O Sheikh,' I said boldly, 'Allah and the Khedive have prospered you with exceeding great prosperity. You have oxen and asses, buffaloes and camels, men servants and maid servants, much millet and cotton, and corn and sugar cane; you drink Frank wine every day of your life and eat the fat of the land, and your harem is full of beautiful women. Now in the village where I live is a Nusrani girl, whose name is Laila. Her eyes are bright toward mine, and I love her as the thirsty land loves water. Yet, hear, O Sheikh, word is brought me now that you wish to take this girl who is mine; and I come to plead with you to-day as Nathan the Prophet pleaded with David, the King of the Beni Israel. If you take away from me my Laila, my one ewe lamb—'

"But, at the word, the Sheikh rose up, and clenched his fist, and was very angry. 'Who is this dog,' he

asked, 'that he should dare to dictate to me?' He called to his slaves that waited on his nod. 'Take this fellow,' he cried in his anger, 'and tie him hand and foot, and flog him as I bid on his naked back, that he may know, being a Christian, an infidel dog, not to meddle with the domestic affairs of Moslems. It were well he were made acquainted with his own vileness by the instrumentality of a hundred lashes. And go to-morrow and bring Laila to me, and take care that the Copt shall never again set eyes on her!'

"Well, effendi, at the words, three strong Arabs seized me—fierce sons of the desert—and bound me hand and foot and beat me with a hundred lashes of the kurbash till my soul was sick and faint within me. I swooned with the disgrace and with the severity of the blows. And I was young in those days. And I was very angry.

"That night I went home to my own mud hut, with black blood in my heart, and took counsel with my brother Sirgeh how I should avenge this insult. But first I sent word by my brother to Laila's hut that Laila's father should bring her to meet us in the dusk, in very great secrecy, by the bank of the river. In the gray twilight she came down. A dahabieh was passing, and in it was a foreigner, a very great prince, an American prince of great wealth and wisdom. I remember his name even. Perhaps the effendi knows him. He was Cyrus P. Quackenboss, and he came from Cincinnati."

"I have not the honor," I answered, smiling at this very unexpected western intrusion.

"Well, anyhow," my Copt continued, unheeding my smile, "we hailed the dahabieh and made the American prince understand how the matter stood. He was very kind. We were brother Christians. He took Laila on board, and promised to deliver her safe to her aunt at Karnak, so that the Sheikh might not know where the girl was gone, nor send to fetch her. And the counsel I took next with my brother was this: In the dead of night I rose up from my hut, and put a mask of white linen over the whole of my face, to conceal my features, and stole out alone, with a thick stick in my hands,

down by the bank of the river. As I went, the jackals prowled around the village for food, and the owls from the tombs flitted high in the moonlight

"I broke into the Sheikh's room by the flat-roofed outhouse that led to his window, and I locked the door; and there, before the Sheikh could rouse his household, I beat him, blow for blow, within an inch of his life, in revenge for my own beating, and because of his injustice in trying to take my Laila from me. The Sheikh was a powerful man, with muscles like iron, and he grappled me hard and tried to wrench the stick from me, and bruised me about the body by flinging me on the ground; and I was weak with my beating and very sore all over. But still, being by nature a strong young man, very fierce with anger, I fought him hard and got him under in the end, and thwacked him till he was as black and blue as I myself was, one mass of bruises from head to foot with my cudgeling. Then, just as his people succeeded in forcing the door, I jumped out of the window upon the flat-roofed outhouse, and leaped lightly to the ground, and darted like a jackal across the open cotton fields and between the plots of doura to my own little hut on the outskirts of the village. I reached there panting, and I knew the Sheikh would kill me for my daring.

"Next morning, early, the Sheikh sent to arrest me. He was blind with rage and with effect of the blows; his face was livid, and his cheeks purple. 'By the beard of the prophet, Athanasio!' he said to me, hitting me hard on the cheek—my name is Athanasio, effendi, after our great patriarch—'your blood shall flow for this, you dog of a Christian. You dare to assault the wearer of a green turban, prince in Islam, a descendant of the prophet! You shall suffer for it, you cur! Your base blood shall flow for it!'

"I cast myself down, like a slave, on the ground before him—though I hated him like sin; for it is well to abase one's self in due time before the face of authority. Besides, by that time Laila was safe, and that was all I cared about. 'Suffer for what, O my Sheikh!' I cried,

as though I knew not what he meant. 'What have I done to your excellency? Who has told you evil words concerning your poor servant? Who has slandered me to my lord, that he is so angry against me?'

"'Take him away!' roared the Sheikh to the three strong Arabs. 'Carry him off to be tried before the Cadi at Assiout.'

"For even in Ismail's days, you see, effendi, before the English came, the Sheikh himself would not have dared to put me to death untried. The power of life and death lay with the Cadi at Assiout.

"So they took me to Assiout, into the Mosque of Ali, where the Cadi sat at the seat of judgment, and arraigned me before him a week later. There the Sheikh appeared, and bore witness against me. Those who spoke for me pleaded that, as the Sheikh himself admitted, the man who broke into his room, and banged him so hard, had his face covered with a linen cloth; how, then, could the Sheikh, in the hurry and the darkness, be sure he recognized me? Perhaps it was some other, who took this means to ruin me. But the Sheikh, for his part, swore by Allah, and by the Holy Stone of the Kaaba at Mecca, that he saw me distinctly, and knew it was I. The moonlight through the window revealed my form to him. And who else in the village but me had a grudge against his justice?

"The Cadi was convinced. The Cadi gave judgment. I was guilty of rebellion against the Sheikh and against ul-Islam; and, being a dog of a Christian, unworthy even to live, his judgment was that after three days' time I should be beheaded in the prison court of Assiout.

"You may guess, effendi, whether or not I was anxious. But Laila was safe; and to save my girl from that wretch's harem I was ready, for my part, to endure anything.

"Two nights long I lay awake and thought strange things by myself in the whitewashed cells of the jail at Assiout. The governor of the prison, who was an European—an Italian, he called himself—and a Chris-

tian of Roum, of those who obey the Pope, was very kind indeed to me. He knew me before (for I had worked in his fields), and was sorry when I told him the tale about Laila. But what would you have? Those were Ismail's days. It was the law of Islam. He could not prevent it.

"On the third evening my brother came round to the prison to see me. He came with many tears in his eyes, bringing evil tidings. My poor old father, he said, was dying at home with grief. They didn't expect he would live till morning. And Laila, too, had stolen back from Karnak unperceived, and was in hiding in the village. She wished to see me just once before I died. But if she came to the prison the Sheikh would find her out and carry her off in triumph to his own harem.

"Would the governor give me leave to go home just that one night to bid farewell to Laila and to my dying father?

"Now, the governor, excellency, was a very human man. And though he was a Christian of Roum, not a Copt like us, he was kind to the Copts as his brother Christians. He pondered awhile to himself, and roped his mustache thus; then he said to me:

"'Athanasio, you are an honest man; the execution is fixed for eight by the clock to-morrow morning. If I give you leave to go home to your father to-night, will you pledge me your word of honor before St. George and the saints to return before seven?'

"'Effendi,' I said kissing his feet, 'you are indeed a good man. I swear by the mother of God and all the saints that dwell in Heaven, that if you let me go I will come back again a full hour before the time fixed for the execution.' And I meant it, too, for I only wished before I died to say good-by once more to Laila.

"Well, the governor took me secretly into his own house, and telling me many times over that he trusted to my honor, and would lose his place if it were known he had let me go, he put me forth, with my brother, by his own private door, making me swear on no account to be late for the execution.

"As soon as I got outside I said to my brother, 'Tell me, Sirgeh, at whose house is Laila?'

"And my brother answered and smiled, 'Laila is still at Karnak, where we sent her for safety, and our father is well. But I have a plan for your escape that I think will serve you.'

"'Never!' I cried, horror-struck, 'if I am to break my word of honor to the governor of the prison.'

"'That isn't it,' he made reply. 'I have a plan of my own which I will proceed in words to make clear before you.'

"What happened next would be long to relate, effendi." But I noticed that the fellah's eyes twinkled as he spoke, like one who passes over of set purpose an important episode. "All I need tell you now is, that the whole night through the good governor lay awake, wondering whether or not I would come home to time, and blaming himself in his heart for having given such leave to a mere condemned criminal. Still, effendi, though I am but poor, I am a man of honor. As the clock struck six in the prison court next morning, I knocked at the governor's window with the appointed signal; and the governor rose and let me into my cell, and praised me for my honor, and was well pleased to see me. 'I knew, Athanasio,' he said, roping his mustache once more, 'you were a man to be trusted.'

"At eight o'clock they took me out into the courtyard. The executioner was there already, a great black Nubian, with a very sharp scimitar. It was terrible to look around; I was greatly frightened. 'Surely,' said I to myself, 'the bitterness of death is past. But Laila is saved; and I die for Laila.'

"I knelt down and bent my head. I feared, after all, no respite was coming. The executioner stood forth and raised the scimitar in his hand. I almost thought I heard it swish through the air; I saw the bright gleam of the blade as it descended. But just at that moment, as the executioner delayed, a loud commotion arose in the outer court. I raised my head and listened. We heard a voice cry, 'In Allah's name, let me in. There

must be no execution.' The gates opened wide, and into the inner courtyard there rode with long strides a great white mule, and on its back, scarcely able to sit up, a sorry figure!

"He was wrapped round in bandages, and swathed from head to foot like a man sore wounded. His face was bruised and his limbs swollen. But he upheld one hand in solemn warning, and in a loud voice again he cried to the executioner, 'In Allah's name, Hassan, let there be no execution!'

"The lookers-on, to right and left, raised a mighty cry, and called out with one voice, 'The Sheikh! The Sheikh! Who can have thus disfigured him?'

"But the Sheikh himself came forward in great pain, like one whose bones ache, and, dismounting from the mule, spoke aloud to the governor. 'In Allah's name,' he said, trembling, 'let this man go; he is innocent. I swore to him falsely, though I believed it to be true. For see, last night, about twelve o'clock, the self-same dog who broke into my house before entered my room, with violence, through the open window. He carried in his hands the self-same stick as last time, and had his face covered, as ever, with a linen cloth. And I knew by his figure and his voice he was the very same dog that had previously beaten me. But before I could cry aloud to rouse the house the infidel had fallen upon me once more, and thwacked me, as you see, within an inch of my life and covered me with bruises, and then bid me take care how I accused innocent people like Athanasio of hurting me. And after that he jumped through the open window and went away once more. And I was greatly afraid, fearing the wrath of Allah if I let this man Athanasio be killed in his stead, though he is but an infidel. And I rose and saddled my mule very early, and rode straight into Assiout to tell you and the Cadi I had borne false witness, and save myself from the guilt of an innocent soul on my shoulders.'

"Then all the people around cried out with one voice, 'A miracle! a miracle!' And the Sheikh stood trembling beside, with faintness and with terror.

"But the governor drew me a few paces apart.

"'Athanasio, you rascal,' he said, half laughing, 'it is you that have done this thing! It is you that have assaulted him! You got out last night on your word of honor on purpose to play this scurvy trick upon us!'

"'Effendi,' I made answer, bowing low, 'life is sweet; he beat me unjustly, first, and he would have taken my Laila from me. Moreover, I swear to you, by St. George and the mother of God, when I left the prison last night, I really believed my father was dying.'

"The governor laughed again. 'Well, you can go, you rogue!' he said. 'The Cadi will soon come around to deliver you. But I advise you to make yourself scarce as fast as you can, for sooner or later this trick of yours may be discovered. I can't tell upon you, or I would lose my place. But you may be found out, for all that. Go at once up the river.'

"That is my hut that you see over yonder, effendi, where Laila and I live. The Sheikh is dead. And the English are now our real lords in Egypt."

Moi Hing was introduced to the readers of ROMANCE last month. In this story they will get another glimpse of the strange workings of our customs and ideas in the Mongolian mind. To this further acquaintance with the Chinese quarter they are indebted to Fred A. Wilson and the columns of the *Evening Sun*.

MOI HING'S CHRISTMAS TREE.

WHEN the Council of Forty, the men of the Chong Wah Kung Saw, made up their minds to send Moi Hing, the Idiot One, back to his home in Kwang-Tung, they did not think he would object. They took the cash out of the treasury and sent a faithful messenger to buy tickets, which they put in a hoh-paau. In with the tickets they also put some silver, that he might not want until he reached the end of his journey and saw once more the faces of his faithful friends. Also, upon a red card was written in black letters by the Sing Sung that "Moi Hing, this man, has cursed the god of his parents, the great Gwan Gwin Shing Te, and is made like a child once more. He has made a Christian god, married a cha'n white woman. He is going home to Kwang-Tung."

They brought Moi Hing on pretence into the council chamber, into the room of ebony and gold, where incense always burns, and they stood him in the middle of the floor on the spot where the prayer sticks are cast before the Joss, and they told him he was to go home. They talked to him a long while before a gleam came into his eye to show he understood. The hoh-paau had been fastened to his silk girdle and he heard the rattle of the silver.

"My ho-tai god has not left me. She is here. Do you think I will ever leave her? See, there she is," and he pointed, then prostrated himself, and murmured: "Ho-tai Sheung-tai; ho-tai, ho-tai."

They looked up, saw nothing, and they whispered to

one another: "We had better get him out of here. Gwan Gwin Shing Te will be angry." And the wise council were much disturbed. It was as if a heathen white man had desecrated their god.

They picked Moi Hing up, but he followed with his eyes the object which they could not see. He broke away from their hands and reviled the Joss.

"Yes, sit and stare," he yelled. "Look all you want at me. May your heung fires burn low and foul, and choke the Kwang-Tung men who come to you for luck."

Then they laid violent hands on him. They pushed him and kicked him toward the narrow stairs, and were about to throw him down, when suddenly he pointed to a dark corner and cried:

"See, my ho-tai Shue. Where are your eyes that you cannot see what I do?" As he knelt they crowded back into the council room like men who are stricken with terror. Each stumbled over the other, and when they were all in they closed the door, heaped quantities of incense on the fires in the bronze jars, and cast in prayer sticks. When they came out the Idiot One was gone. They looked up in the dark corner fearfully, but they saw only darkness.

Around in the room on the top floor of the house on Park Street was the Idiot. It was the same room in which the blue-eyed and curly-haired baby had been born and where she had died. He came and went like a shadow and no one stopped him. They were afraid. The cha'n wife had never returned after the funeral, but the Idiot never missed her. She was never in his mind. At night when he smoked the "opien" he saw in the rising smoke curly yellow hair, like new gold, blue eyes like the twilight sky when the clouds have fled. Then a face appeared, and it seemed as if a pair of little arms were stretched out to him. And more than once, when the faint light of the tang showed dull outlines, he had been tempted to rise from what had once been the shrine of the child and hold the figure in his arms once more. But the grayish smoke only moved faster toward the cracked panes of glass in the gable

window, and the baby god was gone until the smoke should bring it back again.

Thus he would lie and smoke until the effects of the drug held him down. Through half-opened eyes he would see faces all around, and murmuring "ho-tai, ho-tai" (pretty, pretty) he would fall asleep.

The morning after his audience with the Council of Forty he woke up cold and shivering, and as he slipped off the hard boards of his couch he heard a clinking sound at his belt. He looked and found the purse, with its silver and tickets and card. But he could not remember how it came there.

He went out into the streets and walked away from the homes of Kwang-Tung and Peking men. Oh, how he hated them! He walked on and on, shivering in his blouse, with the silver pieces making music at his waist. Everywhere he saw green trees, and toys; and people buying. Bells were ringing, boys were blowing tin horns, everybody had red cheeks, all the faces were happy ones, and the shop windows were almost bursting with their shows. In front of one of the windows stood a little girl. The golden curls which came from under her hood caught the eye of the Idiot. He saw she was looking at the toys.

"You lakkee?" he asked, but she looked frightened and ran away. Then the thought struck him his baby would like them. His dull, passive face became lighted with a new desire. He bought one of the green trees and all he could carry of the pretty toys. Everything that was offered to him he took, until the silver at his waist was gone. Then with lean, half-bare arms clutching tree, toys, and all, he staggered home. At the little hill on Park Street, where it runs up from Mulberry to Mott, he slipped and fell, and the boys greeted him with snowballs and he lost some of his toys. But he got up with an effort and struggled on. He reached the narrow door, and it was a tight squeeze for him to get through without dropping something; but he got inside all right. A Chinaman who was coming down-stairs opened his eyes wide until they were like two moons in

the full instead of new moons, and hurried back and hid himself in a corner until the mumbling Idiot One had passed.

At last he was in his room, and he saw the face again in the darkest corner. He nailed the tree to the heap of boards upon which he lay and smoked, and he put the toys and candles on the green branches. When all was finished the day before Christmas was ready to break. He had heard from his cha'n wife something about the Christ child. There could only be one to him. And in his weakened mind he thought it out that on Christmas That One would come back, his little German wife would reappear, and everything would be the same as before. Only one more day! And he lighted the candles among the green and lay down to smoke.

With the smoke came the blue-eyed visions again, and the candles through his half-opened eyes seemed like stars, they twinkled so.

When would the ho-tai Sheung-tai come? he thought, and thinking he fell asleep. Not into a light sleep, but into that kind of sleep where the opium is master: when it holds you down and makes you powerless; when it takes the life out of your limbs and makes you feel as if you were two instead of one.

The candles on the green tree flickered away, the gray dawn came in the cracked windows and dulled their rays. One candle burned to the branch and sputtered out, so did another and another. The fourth one toppled over, and the burning wick fell upon the blouse of the sleeper. The fall almost put it out, but after a brief rest it gained new life. It burned a hole in the garment. A circle of fire appeared, which grew larger, until it was as big as a man's hand. A little draught whistled in through a cracked pane, and in an instant there was a sheet of fire on the couch. Forked arms and long, thin fingers grasped the Idiot, who leaped up in terror. The flames took on fierce shapes and hideous faces. They looked like the faces of the angry gods in the temple at Kwang-Tung. He had seen them when

a child, and they came back to him now. These were the gods he had cursed and forsaken. He tried to rise, but the red mouths opened wider and the red arms became stronger and pulled him back again. He tried to cry for help, but his tongue rattled in his mouth, and the eyes of the fire demons rolled in their heads. It was the feast of the flames, and when the last one had been satiated it flickered out regretfully and left nothing but a shape.

"The angry gods have destroyed him body and soul," 'twas said in the council chamber, and they cast prayer sticks for their own safety.

There are two Zolas—the Zola of the popular imagination, and the real Zola. It is he who has written this story. As all Zola's work it has a particular end in view. In this story we see the ruthless sacrifice of the innocent and helpless, their pleasures and industries, to war which is the pastime and the passion of nations.

THE ATTACK ON THE MILL.

For twenty years father Merlier had been mayor of Rocreuse. When he married Madeleine Guillard, he had only his two arms, but Madeleine brought him the mill for a dowry.

His wife was now dead, and he lived alone with his daughter Françoise. Merlier was a fine looking old man, a tall, silent figure, who never laughed, but nevertheless he was gay at heart. He was chosen mayor because of his money, and also because he married people in such handsome fashion.

Françoise Merlier was eighteen years old. She had black hair, black eyes, and fresh, rosy color. Still she was not one of the beauties of the country. The quiet ways of her father had made her wise beyond her years. If she laughed it was for the pleasure of others. At heart she was serious.

Naturally from her position she was courted on every side. But when she made her choice all her little world wondered.

On the other side of the Moselle lived a great fellow named Dominique Penquer. He was not of Rocreuse. He came from Belgium ten years before, as the heir of an uncle who owned a little ground on the edge of the forest of Gagny opposite Merlier's mill. He had meant to sell his land and go back. Instead he remained, charmed by the country—he said. Then he raised vegetables, hunted, fished, and lay on the grass and slept when other people worked.

The peasants could explain such an idle life only by the suspicion that he poached at night. The young

girls sometimes undertook his defence because he was good to look upon, supple and tall as a poplar, with blond hair and beard, that shone like gold in the sun. Now one fine morning Françoise told her father that she loved Dominique, and would marry nobody else.

Father Merlier looked as if he had received a stroke. He said nothing, according to his custom, but he was silent for a week. Françoise was silent also. Then one evening, without saying anything, he brought Dominique to the house. Françoise too said nothing but made a place for him at the table, and her smile reappeared. The next morning Father Merlier went to see Dominique at his hut; the two men talked together. No one knew what they said, but after that father Merlier treated Dominique as a son.

All Rocreuse was astounded; the women chattered greatly over the folly of father Merlier. In the midst of all this Françoise and Dominique looked at one another with smiling tenderness. Father Merlier had as yet said nothing of marriage, and both respected his silence. Finally, one day toward the middle of July, he set three tables in the middle of the court and asked his friends to sup with him. Then when the guests stood with glass in hand, father Merlier, raising his voice, said:

"It is with pleasure I announce to you that Françoise is to marry that great fellow there, on the day of Saint Louis."

All laughed and drank merrily. Then father Merlier raised his voice again,

"Dominique, embrace your *fiancée*."

Blushingly the two embraced one another, and the guests laughed still louder.

When the cask was finished and the guests gone, an old peasant spoke of the war the Emperor had declared against Prussia.

"Bah," said father Merlier, with the egotism of a happy man, "Dominique is a foreigner, it doesn't concern him. If the Prussians come he will be here to defend his wife."

The idea that the Prussians might come seemed a

good joke. If they did come, a well-directed stroke on their flank, and that would end it.

"I have already seen them. I have already seen them," muttered the old peasant in a thick, low voice.

A moment's silence and they drank again. Francoise and Dominique heard nothing. They sat behind the others, hand in hand, lost in the shadows that no eyes could pierce.

A month later, on the eve of Saint Louis, the Prussians had beaten the emperor, and were making forced marches toward Rocreuse.

"They are at Tormiere"; "they are at Novelles"; thus each day believing that each night they would fall upon the village and swallow it up.

The night before there had been an alarm; the women fell on their knees, and made the sign of the cross; then they saw the red trousers and opened their windows. It was a French detachment, whose captain had remained at the mill talking with father Merlier.

The captain went about the mill and studied the country with his glass. Merlier went about with him and seemed to give advice. Then the captain posted soldiers behind the walls and the trees, and camped the detachment in the court of the mill. When Merlier came back they questioned him. Was there to be a fight? He nodded his head slowly, without speaking. "Yes, there was to be a fight."

Françoise and Dominique were then in the court and watched him. He finished by taking out his pipe and said:

"Ah, my poor children, to-morrow you were to have been married."

Dominique, with tight lips and angry forehead, stood with eyes fixed on the forest of Gagny that he might see the moment the Prussians arrived; Françoise, pale and serious, went and came, giving the soldiers what they needed.

The captain was delighted. "You have a fortress," he said, "we can hold it until evening. They are late."

The miller remained grave. He saw his mill burn-

ing like a torch. He did not complain. That was useless. All he said was:

"You ought to hide the boat behind the wheel. It may serve you."

The captain was a fine-looking fellow, forty years old. The sight of Françoise and Dominique pleased him. He seemed to have forgotten the approaching struggle. He followed Françoise with his eyes, and his manner showed that he thought her charming. Then turning toward Dominique,

"You are not in the army, my boy?"

"I am a foreigner," replied the young man.

The captain did not appear to accept this reason; he smiled, Françoise was more agreeable company than a rifle. Seeing this Dominique said:

"I am a foreigner, but I can hit an apple at five hundred yards. There is my gun behind you."

"It will be of use," replied the captain.

Françoise approached trembling, and Dominique took her hands in his with a protective air. The captain smiled again, but said nothing. Seated there, his sword between his knees, his eyes far away, he seemed to dream.

Then the sound of a firing broke the silence.

The captain sprang to his feet, the soldiers left their plates of soup, and in a few seconds all were at their posts. From the forest of Gagny arose a slender thread of smoke. The firing continued and grew heavier.

Françoise and Dominique clasped one another, screened by a high wall. A little soldier behind an old boat, firing and hiding while he reloaded his gun, interested them by his droll movements, until they laughed. Then as he raised his head to fire again, he gave a cry and rolled convulsively into a ditch. It was the first death. Françoise shuddered and clung to Dominique in nervous terror.

"Don't stay here," said the captain. "You are under fire." An oak tree shivered overhead, but they did not move when the firing ceased and they heard only the ripple of the Moselle.

Father Merlier looked at the captain with astonishment, "Have they finished?"

"Don't deceive yourself, they are preparing to attack. Get inside."

He had scarcely finished when a shower of leaves fell from the oak. They had fired too high. Dominique drew Françoise closer to him. "Come, children, hide in the cellar. The walls are thick," urged the miller.

They did not heed him, but went into the great room of the mill; here a dozen soldiers were waiting behind the closed shutters. The outposts had not been driven in. The idea was to gain time. The firing continued; an officer reported. The captain drew out his watch.

"Two hours and a half; we must detain them four hours longer."

They shut the great doors of the court and prepared for determined resistance. The Prussians had not yet crossed the Moselle.

Then the firing ceased. At high noon the mill seemed dead. Every shutter was closed, and not a sound came from within.

Then the Prussians showed themselves beyond the woods of Gagny. As they grew bolder the soldiers in the mill prepared to fire.

"No," said the captain, "let them come nearer."

The Prussians looked anxiously at the old mill, silent, gloomy, with closed shutters; then boldly advanced. As they crossed the meadow, the officer gave the word.

The air was filled with the rattle of shots. Françoise clapped her hands to her ears. When the smoke had cleared away, Dominique saw two or three soldiers on their backs in the middle of the field. The others had hid behind the poplars. The siege had begun.

For an hour bullets rattled against the mill. From time to time the captain consulted his watch, and as a ball pierced the shutter and lodged in the ceiling, he murmured:

"Four hours. We can never hold it."

Little by little the mill yielded to the terrible firing.

A shutter fell in the water, pierced like lace-work. They replaced it by a mattress.

At each round Merlier exposed himself to see the blow given his old mill. All was over. Never again would its wheel turn. Dominique begged Françoise to hide, but she refused to leave him; she was seated behind an old oak cupboard that protected her. Then a ball pierced it, and Dominique, gun in hand, placed himself before her.

"Attention," cried the captain suddenly.

A dark mass appeared out of the wood. Then a formidable fire opened. Another shutter dropped and the balls entered. Two soldiers fell, a third was wounded; he said nothing, but fell over the edge of the table, with eyes fixed and staring. In the face of the dead, Françoise, dumb with horror, pushed back her chair mechanically, and sat down on the floor, near the wall.

"Five hours," said the captain. "Let us hold on. They are going to cross the river."

At this moment Françoise cried out. A spent ball struck her on the forehead; some drops of blood flowed.

Dominique saw it. Then going to the window for the first time, he fired. He did not stop, but loaded and fired, unmindful of everything else, except when once he cast a glance at Françoise.

As the captain had foreseen, the Prussians were crossing the river behind the poplars; one too bold fell pierced by a ball from Dominique's gun. The captain, who had watched him, was astonished, and complimented the young man. But Dominique heard nothing. A ball struck his shoulder, another bruised his arm, still he kept on.

The position seemed no longer tenable. A last discharge shook the mill. But the officer only repeated:

"We must hold it another half-hour."

Now he counted the minutes, but kept his amiable air, smiling at Françoise, to reassure her. Then he took a gun from a dead soldier and fired.

There were now but four soldiers left in the room

The Prussians were on the brink. Still the captain waited. An old sergeant ran in.

"They are going to take us from the rear."

The captain took out his watch.

"Five minutes more, they cannot get here before."

At six o'clock precisely he gave the order to retreat, and the men filed out the little door into the street. Before leaving the captain saluted the miller and said,

"Amuse them; we will return."

Meanwhile Dominique remained alone in the mill, still firing, hearing nothing, comprehending nothing. He only knew that he must defend Françoise. With each charge he killed a man. Suddenly there was a great noise; the Prussians rushed in from behind. He fired once more and they fell upon him with his gun smoking in his hand. Four men held him, an unknown language roared around him. Françoise fell on her knees before them in supplication. An officer entered and took him prisoner. After some words in German with the soldiers he turned to Dominique and said roughly, in very good French:

"You will be shot in two hours."

This had been the order issued by the commander-in-chief of the Prussian forces, against peasants who might be found defending their firesides.

The officer, a large man, fifty years old, briefly questioned Dominique.

"Do you belong here?"

"No, I am a Belgian."

"Why did you take up arms? This does not concern you."

Dominique did not answer. Then the officer saw Françoise standing near; the mark of her wound showed a red bar across her pale forehead. He looked at the young couple, first at one, then the other, and seemed to understand.

"You do not deny having fired?"

"I did all I could do," said Dominique tranquilly.

This avowal was useless; he was black with powder,

covered with sweat and a few drops of blood trickled from his shoulder.

"Very well," said the officer. "You will be shot in two hours."

Françoise did not weep. She clasped her hands and raised them with a gesture of mute despair. The officer noticed this. Two soldiers led Dominique away. The young girl fell on a chair and began to weep. The officer still watched her, then spoke,

"Is this youth your brother?" She shook her head. He was silent and serious, then spoke again,

"Has he lived here long?"

"Yes."

"Then he ought to be familiar with the neighboring woods."

"Yes, monsieur," she said, looking at him with surprise.

He added nothing more, but turned on his heels and asked for the mayor of the village.

Françoise took hope, and ran to find her father.

The miller, as soon as the firing had ceased, went to look at his wheel. He adored Françoise, he had a solid liking for Dominique, his future son-in-law, but his wheel was dear to him.

As soon as he knew his two children were safe, he thought of his other cherished one. Now he bent over the great carcass of wood and studied its wounds with a bewildered air. Five paddles were gone. The centre was perforated with bullets. He pushed his finger in the trough of the balls to measure their depth. He was wondering how he could ever repair this destruction. Françoise found him melancholy among the ruins.

"Father," said she, "they want you."

She was still weeping, and related to him what had passed. Father Merlier shook his head, "They do not shoot people like that, I will go see." He reëntered the mill with a silent, peaceable air.

The officer asked for food for the men. Merlier told him that they would obtain nothing by violence, but if left to him he would see that they got it. The officer

was at first angry, but recovered himself before the few decisive words of the old man, and asked, "What are those woods yonder?"

"The woods of Sauval."

"What is their extent."

The miller looked at him steadily.

"I do not know."

Then he went away. An hour after they brought in the levies of food. Night came on. Françoise followed anxiously the movements of the soldiers. Toward seven o'clock her sufferings were horrible. She saw the officer enter the room where Dominique was confined. He stayed there a quarter of an hour, and she heard their excited voices. Then he came out, gave an order in German, and a squad of twelve soldiers with guns ranged themselves in the court; she began to shiver; she thought she was dying. The execution was then to take place. The soldiers remained ten minutes. The voice of Dominique was heard in a steady tone of refusal. Then the officer came out again, banging the door.

"Very well, reflect. I will give you till to-morrow."

With a gesture he dismissed the men. Françoise remained stupefied.

Father Merlier, who continued smoking his pipe, looked at the file of men curiously; then taking Françoise tenderly by the arm, led her into her room.

"Be tranquil," said he, "try and sleep. To-morrow will be another day and we shall see."

Françoise did not sleep; she sat a long time on her bed, listening to the noises without. The German soldiers sang and laughed. But what concerned her most were the sounds in the room beneath where Dominique was confined. She laid down on the floor and put her ear to the plank. She heard Dominique walk from wall to window; sometimes he sat down. Outside all sounds at last ceased, the troops were asleep.

Françoise opened the window softly and leaned out. The night was serene. The moon, setting behind the woods of Sauval, flooded the field which the shadows of

the poplars barred with black. But Françoise thought not of the mysterious charm of the night. She studied the country; looked to see where the sentinels were posted. One only was in front of the mill. She could distinguish him perfectly, a great fellow, immovable, with his face turned upward, and with the dreamy air of a shepherd.

When she had inspected the place carefully, she sat down again on her bed. She sat there an hour absorbed in her thoughts. She listened again, not a breath disturbed the house. She returned to the window and looked out. The moon was down and the night dark, she could no longer see the face of the sentinel; the field was as black as ink. She listened a moment, then climbed out of the window. An iron ladder, its bars fixed in the wall, ran from the wheel to the garret. A long time disused, it was overgrown with moss and ivy.

Françoise bravely seized one of the bars, and swung herself over; she began to descend; her skirts embarrassed her; a stone broken loose fell with a splash into the Moselle below. She stopped, frozen with terror; then she reflected that the noise would cover her descent; she boldly pushed on, tearing away the ivy with her feet to uncover the rungs. When she reached Dominique's window a new danger awaited her. It was not directly beneath her own; she put out her hand and felt—only a wall. Must she then go back and renounce her project? Her arms were tired and the sound of the Moselle below made her dizzy. She picked off a bit of plaster and threw it at Dominique's window. He did not hear; perhaps he slept; she tore her fingers in detaching a bit of stone; she was at the end of her strength; she felt herself falling, when Dominique softly raised the window.

"It is I," she murmured. "Take me quickly, I fall."

He bent out, caught her, and lifted her into the room. She began to cry, but stifled her tears lest some one might hear her. Then, by a supreme effort, she calmed herself.

"You are guarded?" she asked in a low voice.

Dominique, still stupefied at seeing her, pointed to the door. Outside the sentinel had fallen asleep, leaning against the door.

"You must fly" she said quickly; "I have come to beg you to fly and to say adieu."

He did not appear to hear her, but repeated:

"It is you, it is you; oh, how you frightened me. You might have killed yourself."

He took her hands and kissed them.

"How I love you, Françoise, you are as courageous as you are good. I had only one fear, that I would die without seeing you. But you are here, and now they may kill me."

He had drawn her toward him, and her head lay on his shoulder. Danger brought them nearer together.

"Ah," said Dominique in a caressing voice, "this is the day of Saint Louis, our marriage day. Nothing has been able to separate us; we have been faithful to the rendezvous. Have we not, dear? This is our wedding day."

"Yes, yes," she repeated; "our wedding day."

They exchanged a long, lingering kiss.

Suddenly she freed herself; the terrible reality rose before her.

"You must fly, you must fly. We must not lose a minute."

He held out his arms to beg her to return to them.

"O, I pray you," she said, "listen to me. In an hour it will be daybreak. If you die I will die. You must go at once."

Rapidly she explained her plan. The ladder descended to the wheel; by means of the paddles he could reach the boat. It would be easy then to gain the other side of the river and escape.

"But the sentinels?"

"There is but one at the foot of the first willow."

"If he sees me, if he gives the alarm?"

Francoise shuddered; she put in his hand a knife she had brought with her.

"And your father and you?" he asked. "No, I will

not go. If I go they will, perhaps, kill you. You do not know. They will spare me if I will guide them through the forest of Sauval. If they find me gone they are capable of anything."

The young girl would not stop to argue. To all this she only said:

"For love of me, fly. If you love me, Dominique, do not stay another minute in this place."

She promised to climb back to her room; she gave him another passionate embrace. And he yielded, but asked one question more.

"Swear to me that your father knows this and bids me go."

"My father sent me," said Françoise, without hesitation.

She had but one desire, to assure herself of his safety.

"Very well," said Dominique, "I will do as you wish."

They spoke no more. Dominique opened the window. Then a sound at the door froze them. They believed their voices overheard. They clung to one another, expectant, and in terrible anguish. The door creaked but did not open. They heard a sigh, and the long breathing of the soldier asleep across the threshold.

Dominique insisted on Françoise first remounting to her room. They bade one another a mute adieu; then he helped her on to the ladder. When she had gained her room, in a voice light as a zephyr, she breathed down, "*Au revoir*. I love you."

She leaned out, trying to follow Dominique with her eyes. She looked for the sentinel, but could not see him. An instant, and she heard the movement of Dominique's body among the vines. Then the wheel cracked, and a light sound announced that he had found the boat. She saw its black outline against the gray Moselle. A terrible anguish seized her; she thought she heard the alarm of the sentinel; the least noise seemed like the swift steps of the sentinel. Some seconds passed; the country lay in peace. Dominique ought to be across. Françoise saw nothing more. The silence was profound. Then Françoise heard a hoarse cry, and the dull thud

of a body. The silence became deeper; then, as if she had felt death passing she remained frozen and motionless in the face of the night.

At daybreak the miller sought Françoise's chamber and opened the door. She came down into the court pale and calm. But she could not repress a shiver when she saw the body of a Prussian soldier lying under a stained cloak.

Around the body soldiers cried and gesticulated full of fury. The officer called for Merlier as mayor of the commune.

"See," said he, stifling with anger, "one of our men found assassinated by the river. I shall make an example of this, and I call upon you to help us discover the murderer."

"As you will," answered the miller, "but it will not be easy."

The officer turned down a corner of the cloak which covered the body. The sentinel had his throat cut, and the knife remained in the wound. It was a black handled kitchen knife.

"Look at that knife, and then help us in our search."

The old man started, but recovered himself and answered without moving a muscle:

"Everybody has knives like that in our country. Perhaps the man was tired of fighting and ended the matter himself."

"Silence!" cried the officer angrily. "I don't know what keeps me from setting fire to the four corners of this village."

His anger prevented his noticing the change in Françoise's face. She could not keep her eyes from the corpse stretched almost at her feet. He was a big fellow, who looked like Dominique, with his blue eyes and fair hair. This resemblance pierced her heart. Perhaps afar in Germany some loving one would weep. She recognized the knife. She had killed him.

When they discovered Dominique's flight, there was terrible tumult. The officer went into the room, examined the window, and returned furious.

Father Merlier even was annoyed at Dominique's flight.

"The foolish boy, he will ruin everything."

Françoise heard him with anguish. He did not suspect her complicity.

"The scoundrel! the scoundrel!" said the officer, "but we will find him, and the village shall pay for it. Do you know where he is?" to the miller.

Merlier laughed silently, and pointed to the extent of the wood.

"How can you find a man there?" he said.

"Oh, he has haunts that you know. I will give you ten men. You shall guide them."

"It would take eight days to beat those woods."

The calmness of the old man enraged the officer. At this moment he saw Françoise, pale and trembling. The anxious attitude of the young girl struck him. He was silent—looking from her to the old man.

"Is this man the lover of your daughter?" he asked brutally.

Merlier became livid. He drew himself up, but did not answer. Françoise took his face between her hands.

"I see," said the officer, "your girl has helped him to escape. You are her accomplice. Once more, will you give him up?"

The miller did not answer. He looked away indifferently, as if he had not been addressed. The officer was overcome with anger.

"Very well. You shall be shot in his place."

Again he gave order for the tale of soldiers.

Merlier shrugged his shoulders phlegmatically; all this drama seemed in doubtful taste. He did not believe that men were shot so easily. When the soldiers had come, he said gravely:

"Then this is serious. Very well, if it must be, I as well as another."

Françoise sprang up wildly supplicating:

"Pity, monsieur, pity. Do not harm my father. Kill me in his place. I alone am to blame."

"Be silent, my child," said the old man. "Why do you say what is not true. She spent the night in her chamber, monsieur, I assure you."

"No, I speak the truth," she replied, "I climbed down to his window, I made him go. It is the truth, the only truth."

The old man grew pale. He saw that it was true, this astounding story. Ah, these children with their hearts, they spoil everything.

"She is beside herself, she does not know what she says. Let us end this."

She still protested, threw herself on her knees, and clasped her hands.

The officer listened.

"My God! finish this. I take your father, because I have not the other. Find him and your father shall be free."

"Horrible, horrible! where can I find Dominique, at this hour? He is gone, I know no more."

"Choose. He or your father."

"Oh, my God! How can I choose? If I knew where Dominique was, how could I choose? My heart will break. Let me die, the sooner the better. Kill me I beg of you, kill me."

The officer became impatient.

"Enough. I do not desire to be cruel. I will give you two hours. If in two hours your lover is not here your father shall pay for him."

Merlier was led into Dominique's prison. His face showed no emotion. But when he was alone two great tears rolled down his cheeks. His poor child, how she suffered!

Françoise stood in the middle of the court. The soldiers passed her with pleasantries she could not understand.

She had two hours. This phrase rang in her head. Where to go, what to do? Mechanically she went toward the river and crossed it on the big rocks. She saw a spot of blood on the shore, and turned pale. She followed the traces of Dominique in the disturbed grasses,

that led across the meadow into the wood. There they ended. She threw herself into the wood; she sat down a moment. How long had she been gone, five minutes, a half-hour? She sprang to her feet. Perhaps Dominique was hid in a dell where they had gathered nuts together. A lark flew by uttering its sweet, sad note. Perhaps he had taken refuge in the rocks. She sought him there; the desire to find him took possession of her; she would climb a tree and look. She sought for one calling his name every few steps. Only the cuckoos answered her. Once she thought she saw him, she stopped. No, she could not take him back to be shot. She would not tell him. She would beg him to go on, to save himself. Then she thought of her father, and what awaited him. She fell on the turf crying out,

"My God! my God! why am I here?"

Frantically she sought to fly from the forest. Three times when she believed she had found the mill she came out on the prairie. At last she saw the village and stopped. How could she go back alone?

She stood a moment; a voice called her sweetly, "Françoise, Françoise."

She saw Dominique lifting his head out of a ditch.

She had found him. Heaven then wished his death. She cried out, and fell in the ditch.

"You want me?"

"Yes," she answered, not knowing what she said.

"What has happened?"

Her eyes fell, she murmured:

"Nothing, nothing, I was restless. I wanted to see you."

When she was quiet he explained that he was not going away lest the Prussians be revenged on them. All would be well, and, he added, laughing:

"Our wedding will be a week later, that is all."

Then, as she remained bewildered, he became grave.

"You are concealing something."

"No, I swear it, I ran away to come here."

He embraced her, and told her it was imprudent for

them to remain longer there. He must go into the forest. She held him shuddering.

"Listen. You had better stay here; no one seeks you, fear nothing."

"Françoise, you conceal something," he repeated.

Again she denied it, only she wanted to be near him; she evaded him, she appeared so strange, that now he refused to leave her, otherwise he would seek the French troops; he had seen some on the other side of Sauval.

"Ah, they come, they will soon be here," she murmured eagerly.

The clock of Rocreuse sounded eleven. The strokes were clear, distinct. She was terrified. It was two hours since she had left the mill.

"Listen. If we have need of you, I will wave a handkerchief from my window."

She ran and left him. Dominique, uneasy, walked along the border of the ditch toward the mill.

As she ran toward Rocreuse Françoise met an old beggar, Bontemps, who knew the country thoroughly. He greeted her, he had just seen the miller in the hands of the Prussians; he made the sign of the cross and passed on.

"The two hours are up," said the officer when Françoise appeared.

Merlier was there, on a bench, still smoking. Again the young girl begged and wept on her knees; she wanted to gain time in the hope that the French would arrive. As she implored, she thought she could hear the tramp of the soldiers. Oh! if they would but come and deliver them!

"But one hour, one hour more, grant me but one hour!"

The officer was immovable. He ordered two men to take her out, that the execution might proceed quietly. A frightful struggle rent her heart. She could not kill her father. No, she would die instead with Dominique; she started to her chamber—and at that moment Dominique entered the door.

The officer and soldiers gave a cry of triumph.

But as if only Françoise were there, he went toward her gravely.

"This was not well. Why did you not bring me back? It was left for father Bontemps to tell me. Here I am."

The Prussians shut Dominique up without saying what fate was in store for him. Françoise, overwhelmed with anguish, remained in the court, despite the wishes of her father. She expected the French. But the hours ran by, and night was coming on.

At length the Prussians made preparations for departure. The officer, as the evening before, entered Dominique's room. Françoise knew that his fate was decided. She clasped her hands and prayed. Her father at her side kept the silent, rigid attitude of an old peasant who knows he can not struggle against fate.

"Oh, my God, my God!" murmured Françoise, "they will kill him."

The miller drew her toward him, and took her on his knees like a child.

The officer came out; behind him two men led Dominique.

"Never, never," said he; "I am ready to die."

"Reflect," said the officer, "this service you refuse me, another will give. I offer you your life. I am generous; guide us through the wood to Montredon."

Dominique did not answer. "Why are you so obstinate?"

"Kill me. Let us finish this," he replied.

Françoise, with clasped hands, besought him. She would have agreed even to dishonor. Merlier took her hands so that the Prussians should not see her wild gestures.

"He is right," murmured he. "Death is better."

The file of soldiers was there, the officer waited for some sign of weakness on Dominique's part. All were silent. Afar were heard violent strokes of thunder; a dull heat oppressed them. In the midst of this silence was a cry:

"The French, the French!"

On the road to Sauval, along the edge of the wood,

could be seen a line of red pantaloons. All was confusion in the mill. The Prussians ran here and there with guttural exclamations.

"The French! the French!" cried Françoise, clapping her hands.

She was like one demented. She broke from her father's arms, and ran about laughing and waving her arms. They would come, they would come in time, Dominique would live.

The sound of firing startled her like a thunder-clap. She turned. The officer said:

"First, let us finish this affair."

With his own hand he pressed Dominique against the wall of the stable and gave the order to fire.

Then Françoise saw Dominique, his breast pierced by a dozen balls.

She did not weep, she stood dazed, her eyes fixed on the stable; occasionally she made a wondering childlike movement of the hand. The Prussians had seized the miller as a hostage.

It was a fine fight. The officer could not retreat, he must sell his life as dearly as possible. It was the Prussians who now defended the mill and the French who attacked it. For a half-hour the fusillade continued.

The French posted a battery in the ditch below, that had concealed Dominique. The struggle now would not be long.

Ah, the poor mill, the balls pierced it through and through. The ivy torn from the crumbling walls hung like caterpillars. The Moselle carried away the chamber of Françoise; it was torn open exposing the bed with its white curtains. Suddenly the old wheel received two balls, and gave one supreme groan; the paddles floated off, the framework fell; the soul of the mill had passed away.

Then the French made an assault. The fight raged furiously, hemmed in by the forest, like the walls of an amphitheatre around the combatants.

Françoise remained motionless, bent over the dead body of Dominique. Father Merlier lay dead, struck

by a wandering ball. Then, when the Prussians were exterminated and the mill in flames, the French captain once more entered the court. It was his first success. Flushed with excitement, his tall height seemed to increase, he laughed with the pleasant air of a gay cavalier, and seeing Françoise demented between the bodies of her husband and her father, lying among the smoking ruins of the mill he saluted her gaily with his sword, crying:

"Victory, Victory!"

[NOTE.—It is rumored that the proprietors of a well-known museum in this city have made arrangements with Dr. X—— to exhibit to the public the singular cast which Mr. Escott deposited with him. So extraordinary a history cannot fail to attract universal attention.]

Inquiry has been made among the different museums concerning the truth of this rumor which was made public by Fitz James O'Brien some years ago in *Harper's Monthly* and which the proprietors have allowed us to reprint. But the singular reticence observed by the authorities only serves to deepen the mystery,

WHAT WAS IT?

IT is, I confess, with considerable diffidence that I approach the strange narrative which I am about to relate. The events which I purpose detailing are of so extraordinary and unheard-of a character that I am quite prepared to meet with an unusual amount of incredulity and scorn. I accept all such beforehand. I have, I trust, the literary courage to face unbelief. I have, after mature consideration, resolved to narrate, in as simple and straightforward a manner as I can compass, some facts that passed under my observation in the month of July last, and which, in the annals of the mysteries of physical science, are wholly unparalleled.

I live at No. — Twenty-sixth Street, in this city. The house is in some respects a curious one. It has enjoyed for the last two years the reputation of being haunted. It is a large and stately residence, surrounded by what was once a garden, but which is now only a green inclosure used for bleaching clothes. The dry basin of what has been a fountain, and a few fruit-trees, ragged and unpruned, indicate that this spot, in past days, was a pleasant, shady retreat, filled with fruits and flowers and the sweet murmur of waters.

The house is very spacious. A hall of noble size leads to a vast spiral staircase winding through its centre; while the various apartments are of imposing dimensions. It was built some fifteen or twenty years since

by Mr. A——, the well-known New York merchant, who five years ago threw the commercial world into convulsions by a stupendous bank fraud. Mr. A——, as every one knows, escaped to Europe, and died not long after of a broken heart. Almost immediately after the news of his decease reached this country, and was verified, the report spread in Twenty-sixth Street that No. — was haunted. Legal measures had dispossessed the widow of its former owner, and it was inhabited merely by a care-taker and his wife, placed there by the house-agent into whose hands it had passed for the purposes of renting or sale. These people declared that they were troubled with unnatural noises. Doors were opened without any visible agency. The remnants of furniture scattered through the various rooms were, during the night, piled one upon the other by unknown hands. Invisible feet passed up and down the stairs in broad daylight, accompanied by the rustle of unseen silk dresses and the gliding of viewless hands along the massive balusters. The care-taker and his wife declared they would live there no longer. The house-agent laughed, dismissed them, and put others in their place. The noises and supernatural manifestations continued. The neighborhood caught up the story, and the house remained untenanted for three years. Several parties negotiated for it; but somehow, always before the bargain was closed they heard the unpleasant rumors, and declined to treat any further.

It was in this state of things that my landlady—who at that time kept a boarding-house in Bleecker Street, and who wished to move farther uptown—conceived the bold idea of renting No. — Twenty-sixth Street. Happening to have in her house rather a plucky and philosophical set of boarders, she laid her scheme before us, stating candidly everything she had heard respecting the ghostly qualities of the establishment to which she wished to remove us. With the exception of one or two timid persons—a sea-captain and a returned Californian, who immediately gave notice that they would leave—every one of Mrs. Moffat's guests declared that they

would accompany her in her chivalric incursion into the abode of spirits.

Our removal was effected in the month of May, and we were all charmed with our new residence. The portion of Twenty-sixth Street where our house is situated —between Seventh and Eighth avenues—is one of the pleasantest localities in New York. The gardens back of the houses, running down nearly to the Hudson, form, in the summer time, a perfect avenue of verdure. The air is pure and invigorating, sweeping, as it does, straight across the river from the Weehawken heights, and even the ragged garden which surrounded the house on two sides, although displaying on washing-days rather too much clothes-line, still gave us a piece of green sward to look at, and a cool retreat in the summer evenings, where we smoked our cigars in the dusk, and watched the fire-flies flashing their dark-lanterns in the long grass.

Of course we had no sooner established ourselves at No. — than we began to expect the ghosts. We absolutely awaited their advent with eagerness. Our dinner conversation was supernatural. One of the boarders, who had purchased Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature" for his own private delectation, was regarded as a public enemy by the entire household for not having bought twenty copies. The man led a life of supreme wretchedness while he was perusing the volume. A system of espionage was established, of which he was the victim. If he incautiously laid the book down for an instant and left the room, it was immediately seized and read aloud in secret places to a select few. I found myself a person of immense importance, it having leaked out that I was tolerably well versed in the history of supernaturalism, and had once written a story, entitled "The Pot of Tulips," for *Harper's Monthly*, the foundation of which was a ghost. If a table or a wainscot panel had happened to warp when we were assembled in the large drawing-room, there was an instant silence, and every one was prepared for an immediate clanking of chains and a spectral form.

After a month of psychological excitement, it was with the utmost dissatisfaction that we were forced to acknowledge that nothing in the remotest degree approaching the supernatural had manifested itself. Once the black butler asseverated that his candle had been blown out by some invisible agency while in the act of undressing himself for the night; but as I had more than once discovered this colored gentleman in a condition when one candle must have appeared to him like two, I thought it possible that, by going a step farther in his potations, he might have reversed this phenomenon, and seen no candle at all where he ought to have beheld one.

Things were in this state when an incident took place so awful and inexplicable in its character that my reason fairly reels at the bare memory of the occurrence. It was the 10th of July. After dinner was over I repaired, with my friend Dr. Hammond, to the garden to smoke my evening pipe. Independent of certain mental sympathies which existed between the doctor and myself, we were linked together by a secret vice. We both smoked opium. We knew each other's secret, and respected it. We enjoyed together that wonderful expansion of thought; that marvellous intensifying of the perceptive faculties; that boundless feeling of existence when we seem to have points of contact with the whole universe; in short, that unimaginable spiritual bliss, which I would not surrender for a throne; and which I hope you, reader, will never—never taste.

Those hours of opium happiness which the doctor and I spent together in secret were regulated with a scientific accuracy. We did not blindly smoke the drug of Paradise, and leave our dreams to chance. While smoking we carefully steered our conversation through the brightest and calmest channels of thought. We talked of the East, and endeavored to recall the magical panorama of its glowing scenery. We criticised the most sensuous poets, those who painted life ruddy with health, brimming with passion, happy in the possession of youth, and strength, and beauty. If we talked of Shakes-

peare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," we lingered over Ariel and avoided Caliban. Like the Gebers, we turned our faces to the East, and saw only the sunny side of the world.

This skilful coloring of our train of thought produced in our subsequent visions a corresponding tone. The splendors of Arabian fairy-land dyed our dreams. We paced that narrow strip of grass with the tread and port of kings. The song of the *Rana arborea* while he clung to the bark of the ragged plum-tree sounded like the strains of divine orchestras. Houses, walls, and streets melted like rain-clouds, and vistas of unimaginable glory stretched away before us. It was a rapturous companionship. We each of us enjoyed the vast delight more perfectly because, even in our most ecstatic moments, we were ever conscious of each other's presence. Our pleasures, while individual, were still twin, vibrating and moving in musical accord.

On the evening in question, the 10th of July, the doctor and myself found ourselves in an unusually metaphysical mood. We lit our large meerschaums, filled with fine Turkish tobacco, in the core of which burned a little black nut of opium, that, like the nut in the fairy tale, held within its narrow limits wonders beyond the reach of kings; we paced to and fro, conversing. A strange perversity dominated the currents of our thought. They would *not* flow through the sun-lit channels into which we strove to divert them. For some unaccountable reason they constantly diverged into dark and lonesome beds, where a continual gloom brooded. It was in vain that, after our old fashion, we flung ourselves on the shores of the East, and talked of its gay bazaars, of the splendors of the time of Haroun, of harems and golden palaces. Black afreets continually arose from the depths of our talk, and expanded, like the one the fisherman released from the copper vessel, until they blotted out everything bright from our vision. Insensibly we yielded to the occult force that swayed us, and indulged in gloomy speculation. We had talked some time upon the proneness of human mind to mysticism

and the almost universal love of the Terrible, when Hammond suddenly said to me:

"What do you consider to be the greatest element of Terror?"

The question, I own, puzzled me. That many things were terrible, I knew. Stumbling over a corpse in the dark; beholding, as I once did, a woman floating down a deep and rapid river, with wildly lifted arms and awful, upturned face, uttering, as she sank, shrieks that rent one's heart, while we, the spectators, stood frozen at a window which overhung the river at a height of sixty feet, unable to make the slightest effort to save her, but dumbly watching her last supreme agony and her disappearance. A shattered wreck, with no life visible, encountered floating listlessly on the ocean, is a terrible object, for it suggests a huge terror, the proportions of which are veiled. But it now struck me for the first time that there must be one great and ruling embodiment of fear, a King of Terrors to which all others must succumb. What might it be? To what train of circumstances would it owe its existence?

"I confess, Hammond," I replied to my friend, "I never considered the subject before. That there must be one something more terrible than any other thing, I feel. I cannot attempt, however, even the most vague definition."

"I am somewhat like you, Harry," he answered. "I feel my capacity to experience a terror greater than anything yet conceived by the human mind. Something combining in fearful and unnatural amalgamation hitherto supposed incompatible elements. The calling of the voices in Brockden Brown's novel of 'Wieland' is awful; so is the picture of the Dweller of the Threshold in Bulwer's 'Zanoni'; but," he added, shaking his head gloomily, "there is something more horrible still than these."

"Look here, Hammond," I rejoined; "let us drop this kind of talk for Heaven's sake. We shall suffer for it, depend on it."

"I don't know what's the matter with me to-night,"

he replied, "but my brain is running upon all sorts of weird and awful thoughts. I feel as if I could write a story like Hoffman to-night, if I were only master of a literary style."

"Well, if we are going to be Hoffmanesque in our talk I'm off to bed. Opium and nightmares should never be brought together. How sultry it is! Good night, Hammond."

"Good night, Harry. Pleasant dreams to you."

"To you, gloomy wretch, afreets, ghouls, and enchanters."

We parted, and each sought his respective chamber. I undressed quickly and got into bed, taking with me, according to my usual custom, a book, over which I generally read myself to sleep. I opened the volume as soon as I had laid my head upon the pillow, and instantly flung it to the other side of the room. It was Goudon's "History of Monsters"—a curious French work, which I had lately imported from Paris, but which, in the state of mind I was then in, was anything but an agreeable companion. I resolved to go to sleep at once; so turning down my gas until nothing but a little blue point of light glimmered on the top of the tube, I composed myself to rest once more.

The room was in total darkness. The atom of gas that still remained lighted did not illuminate a distance of three inches round the burner.

I desperately drew my arm across my eyes, as if to shut out even the darkness, and tried to think of nothing. It was in vain. The confounded themes touched on by Hammond in the garden kept obtruding themselves on my brain. I battled against them. I erected ramparts of would-be blankness of intellect to keep them out. They still crowded upon me. While I was lying still as a corpse, hoping that by a perfect physical inaction I would hasten mental repose, an awful incident occurred. A Something dropped, as it seemed, from the ceiling, plumb upon my chest, and the next instant I felt two bony hands encircling my throat, endeavoring to choke me.

I am no coward, and am possessed of considerable physical strength. The suddenness of the attack instead of stunning me strung every nerve to its highest tension. My body acted from instinct, before my brain had time to realize the terrors of my position. In an instant I wound two muscular arms around the creature, and squeezed it, with all the strength of despair, against my chest. In a few seconds the bony hands that had fastened on my throat loosened their hold, and I was free to breathe once more. Then commenced a struggle of awful intensity. Immersed in the most profound darkness, totally ignorant of the nature of the Thing by which I was so suddenly attacked, finding my grasp slipping every moment by reason, it seemed to me, of the entire nakedness of my assailant, bitten with sharp teeth in the shoulder, neck, and chest, having every moment to protect my throat against a pair of sinewy, agile hands, which my utmost efforts could not confine—these were a combination of circumstances to combat which required all the strength and skill and courage that I possessed.

At last, after a silent, deadly, exhausting struggle, I got my assailant under by a series of incredible efforts of strength. Once pinned, with my knee on what I made out to be its chest, I knew that I was victor. I rested for a moment to breathe. I heard the creature beneath me panting in the darkness, and felt the violent throbbing of a heart. It was apparently as exhausted as I was, that was one comfort. At this moment I remembered that I usually placed under my pillow, before going to bed, a large, yellow silk pocket-handkerchief. I felt for it instantly; it was there. In a few seconds more I had, after a fashion, pinnioned the creature's arms.

I now felt tolerably secure. There was nothing more to be done but to turn on the gas, and, having first seen what my midnight assailant was like, arouse the household. I will confess to being actuated by a certain pride in not giving the alarm before; I wished to make the capture alone and unaided.

Never loosing my hold for an instant, I slipped from the bed to the floor, dragging my captive with me. I had but a few steps to make to reach the gas-burner; these I made with the greatest caution, holding the creature in a grip like a vise. At last I got within arm's-length of the tiny speck of blue light, which told me where the gas-burner lay. Quick as lightning I released my grasp with one hand and let on the full flood of light. Then I turned to look at my captive.

I cannot even attempt to give any definition of my sensations the instant after I turned on the gas. I suppose I must have shrieked with terror, for in less than a minute afterward my room was crowded with the inmates of the house. I shudder now as I think of that awful moment. *I saw nothing!* Yes; I had one arm firmly clasped round a breathing, panting, corporeal shape, my other hand gripped with all its strength a throat as warm, and apparently fleshly, as my own; and yet, with this living substance in my grasp, with its body pressed against my own, and all in the bright glare of a large jet of gas, I absolutely beheld nothing! Not even an outline—a vapor!

I do not even at this hour realize the situation in which I found myself. I cannot recall the astounding incident thoroughly. Imagination in vain tries to compass the awful paradox.

It breathed. I felt its warm breath upon my cheek. It struggled fiercely. It had hands. They clutched me. Its skin was smooth, just like my own. There it lay, pressed close up against me, solid as stone—and yet utterly invisible!

I wonder that I did not faint or go mad on the instant. Some wonderful instinct must have sustained me; for, absolutely, in place of loosening my hold on the terrible Enigma, I seemed to gain an additional strength in my moment of horror, and tightened my grasp with such wonderful force that I felt the creature shivering with agony.

Just then Hammond entered my room at the head of the household. As soon as he beheld my face—which,

I suppose, must have been an awful sight to look at—he hastened forward, crying:

"Great Heaven, Harry! what has happened?"

"Hammond, Hammond," I cried, "come here. Oh, this is awful. I have been attacked in bed by something or other, which I have hold of; but I can't see it, I can't see it."

Hammond, doubtless struck by the unfeigned horror expressed in my countenance, made one or two steps forward with an anxious yet puzzled expression. A very audible titter burst from the remainder of my visitors. This suppressed laughter made me furious. To laugh at a human being in my position! It was the worst species of cruelty. *Now*, I can understand why the appearance of a man struggling violently, as it would seem, with an airy nothing, and calling for assistance against a vision, should have appeared ludicrous. *Then*, so great was my rage against the mocking crowd that had I the power I would have stricken them dead where they stood.

"Hammond, Hammond," I cried again, despairingly, "for God's sake come to me. I can hold the—the Thing but a short while longer. It is overpowering me. Help me. Help me!"

"Harry," whispered Hammond, approaching me, "you have been smoking too much opium."

"I swear to you, Hammond, that this is no vision," I answered, in the same low tone. "Don't you see how it shakes my whole frame with its struggles? If you don't believe me convince yourself. Feel it—touch it."

Hammond advanced and laid his hand in the spot I indicated. A wild cry of horror burst from him. He had felt it!

In a moment he had discovered somewhere in my room a long piece of cord, and was the next instant winding it and knotting it about the body of the unseen being that I clasped in my arms.

"Harry," he said, in a hoarse, agitated voice, for, though he preserved his presence of mind, he was deeply

moved, "Harry, it's all safe now. You may let go, old fellow, if you're tired. The Thing can't move."

I was utterly exhausted, and I gladly loosed my hold.

Hammond stood holding the ends of the cord that bound the Invisible, twisted round his hand, while before him, self-supporting, as it were, he beheld a rope laced and interlaced, and stretching tightly around a vacant space. I never saw a man look so thoroughly stricken with awe. Nevertheless his face expressed all the courage and determination which I knew him to possess. His lips, although white, were set firmly, and one could perceive at a glance that, although stricken with fear, he was not daunted.

The confusion that ensued among the guests of the house, who were witnesses of this extraordinary scene between Hammond and myself—who beheld the pantomime of binding this struggling Something—who beheld me almost sinking from physical exhaustion when my task of jailer was over—the confusion and terror that took possession of the bystanders, when they saw all this, was beyond description. Many of the weaker ones fled from the apartment. The few who remained behind clustered near the door, and could not be induced to approach Hammond and his Charge. Still incredulity broke out through their terror. They had not the courage to satisfy themselves, and yet they doubted. It was in vain that I begged of some of the men to come near and convince themselves by touch of the existence of a living being in that room which was invisible. They were incredulous, but did not dare to undeceive themselves. How could a solid, living, breathing body be invisible? they asked. My reply was this. I gave a sign to Hammond, and both of us—conquering our fearful repugnance to touching the invisible creature—lifted it from the ground, manacled as it was, and took it to my bed. Its weight was about that of a boy of fourteen.

"Now, my friends," I said, as Hammond and myself held the creature suspended over the bed, "I can give you self-evident proof that here is a solid, ponderable body

which, nevertheless, you cannot see. Be good enough to watch the surface of the bed attentively."

I was astonished at my own courage in treating this strange event so calmly; but I had recovered from my first terror, and felt a sort of scientific pride in the affair which dominated every other feeling.

The eyes of the bystanders were immediately fixed on my bed. At a given signal Hammond and I let the creature fall. There was the dull sound of a heavy body alighting on a soft mass. The timbers of the bed creaked. A deep impression marked itself distinctly on the pillow, and on the bed itself. The crowd who witnessed this gave a sort of low, universal cry, and rushed from the room. Hammond and I were left alone with our Mystery.

We remained silent for some time, listening to the low, irregular breathing of the creature on the bed, and watching the rustle of the bed-clothes as it impotently struggled to free itself from confinement. Then Hammond spoke.

"Harry, this is awful."

"Ay, awful."

"But not unaccountable."

"Not unaccountable! What do you mean? Such a thing has never occurred since the birth of the world. I know not what to think, Hammond. God grant that I am not mad, and that this is not an insane fantasy!"

"Let us reason a little, Harry. Here is a solid body which we touch, but which we cannot see. The fact is so unusual that it strikes us with terror. Is there no parallel, though, for such a phenomenon? Take a piece of pure glass. It is tangible and transparent. A certain chemical coarseness is all that prevents its being so entirely transparent as to be totally invisible. It is not *theoretically impossible*, mind you, to fabricate a glass which shall not reflect a single ray of light—a glass so pure and homogenous in its atoms that the rays from the sun shall pass through it as they do through the air, refracted but not reflected. We do not see the air, and yet we feel it."

"That's all very well, Hammond, but these are inanimate substances. Glass does not breathe, air does not breathe. *This* thing has a heart that palpitates. A will that moves it. Lungs that play and inspire and respire."

"You forget the strange phenomena of which we have so often heard of late," answered the Doctor, gravely. "At the meetings called 'spirit circles,' invisible hands have been thrust into the hands of those persons round the table—warm, fleshly hands that seemed to pulsate with mortal life."

"What? Do you think, then, that this thing is——"

"I don't know what it is," was the solemn reply; "but please the gods I will, with your assistance, thoroughly investigate it."

We watched together, smoking many pipes, all night long by the bedside of the unearthly being that tossed and panted until it was apparently wearied out. Then we learned by the low, regular breathing that it slept.

The next morning the house was all astir. The boarders congregated on the landing outside my room, and Hammond and myself were lions. We had to answer a thousand questions as to the state of our extraordinary prisoner, for as yet not one person in the house except ourselves could be induced to set foot in the apartment.

The creature was awake. This was evidenced by the convulsive manner in which the bed-clothes were moved in its efforts to escape. There was something truly terrible in beholding, as it were, those second-hand indications of the terrible writhings and agonized struggles for liberty, which themselves were invisible.

Hammond and myself had racked our brains during the long night to discover some means by which we might realize the shape and general appearance of the Enigma. As well as we could make out by passing our hands over the creature's form, its outlines and lineaments were human. There was a mouth; a round smooth head without hair; a nose, which, however, was a little elevated above the cheeks; and its hands and feet felt like those of a boy. At first we thought

of placing the being on a smooth surface and tracing its outline with chalk, as shoemakers trace the outline of the foot. This plan was given up as being of no value. Such an outline would give not the slightest idea of its conformation.

A happy thought struck me. We would take a cast of it in plaster of Paris. This would give us the solid figure, and satisfy all our wishes. But how to do it? The movements of the creature would disturb the setting of the plastic covering, and distort the mould. Another thought. Why not give it chloroform? It had respiratory organs—that was evident by its breathing. Once reduced to a state of insensibility, we could do with it what we would. Doctor X—— was sent for; and after the worthy physician had recovered from the first shock of amazement, he proceeded to administer the chloroform. In three minutes afterward we were enabled to remove the fetters from the creature's body, and a well-known modeler of this city was busily engaged in covering the invisible form with the moist clay. In five minutes more we had a mould and before evening a rough fac-simile of the Mystery. It was shaped like a man. Distorted, uncouth, and horrible, but still a man. It was small, not over four feet and some inches in height, and its limbs betrayed a muscular development that was unparalleled. Its face surpassed in hideousness anything that I had ever seen. Gustave Doré, or Callot, or Tony Johannot never conceived anything so horrible. There is a face in one of the latter's illustrations to "*Un voyage où il vous plaira*," which somewhat approaches the countenance of this creature, but does not equal it. It was the physiognomy of what I should have fancied a ghoul to be. It looked as if it was capable of feeding on human flesh.

Having satisfied our curiosity, and bound every one in the house over to secrecy, it became a question what was to be done with our Enigma? It was impossible that we should keep such a horror in our house; it was equally impossible that such an awful being should be let loose upon the world. I confess that I would have

gladly voted for the creature's destruction. But who would shoulder the responsibility? Who would undertake the execution of this horrible semblance of a human being? Day after day this question was deliberated gravely. The boarders all left the house. Mrs. Moffat was in despair, and threatened Hammond and myself with all sorts of legal penalties if we did not remove the Horror. Our answer was, "We will go if you like, but we decline taking this creature with us. Remove it yourself, if you please. It appeared in your house. On you the responsibility rests." To this there was, of course, no answer. Mrs. Moffat could not obtain for love or money a person who would even approach the Mystery.

The most singular part of the transaction was, that we were entirely ignorant of what the creature habitually fed on. Everything in the way of nutriment that we could think of was placed before it, but was never touched. It was awful to stand by, day after day, and see the clothes toss and hear the hard breathing, and know that it was starving.

Ten, twelve days, a fortnight passed, and it still lived. The pulsations of the heart, however, were daily growing fainter, and had now nearly ceased altogether. It was evident that the creature was dying for want of sustenance. While this terrible life-struggle was going on I felt miserable. I could not sleep of nights. Horrible as the creature was, it was pitiful to think of the pangs it was suffering.

At last it died. Hammond and I found it cold and stiff one morning in the bed. The heart had ceased to beat, the lungs to inspire. We hastened to bury it in the garden. It was a strange funeral, the dropping of that viewless corpse into the damp hole. The cast of its form I gave to Doctor X——, who keeps it in his museum in Tenth Street.

As I am on the eve of a long journey from which I may not return, I have drawn up this narrative of an event the most singular that has ever come to my knowledge.

HARRY ESCOTT.

The following story unfortunately does not end as should all love stories. In its favor should be pleaded that it was swift and brief. It was written by Mary Gay Humphreys for *The Epoch*, and is reprinted by permission in ROMANCE.

JOHN TEMPLE.

My first piquant encounter with John Temple was when I was about seven years old.

He said the *Bostona* was the fastest boat on the Ohio. And I stood for the *Daniel Boone*. The *Boone* had given a dinner to which my father and mother were invited, while his were not. On these facts we each based our conclusions on the comparative speed of the different boats, and, tooth and nail, rolled over in the dust to maintain them.

We were picked up variously by old Cerberus, who was picking his banjo at one end of the hotel gallery, and by a journeyman shoemaker and a telegraph operator playing chess at the other end. This they did with divers words of scorn at the kicking boy. To this day I believe that if we had been left alone I would have whipped; for although small I was active.

Shortly after we moved away to Washington, where my father spent one year in getting a consular appointment which he held for six years. Then we came back to our village life. John Temple was now a beautiful youth, strong-limbed, broad-shouldered, with a head like a Greek god. To these physical perfections he added a charm of manner as captivating to his fellows as to the opposite sex. Underneath this lay a tenacity of purpose which made him invincible.

He was adored frankly by all the girls of the school of which I speedily found myself a member. Among these he scattered his attentions according to his royal pleasure. Those who received them were elated and grateful. Those who did not, patiently waited their turn.

Although younger than the others I held their barnyard acceptance of John Temple's attentions with silent scorn. "I'd hate to run after a boy," was my inward comment.

But I was soon singled out as the one he most delighted to honor. I was younger than the others. Thus might an older boy play with a child, for the years had not greatly increased my stature. But while the other girls sued for his attentions I only accepted them. That I made no response encouraged him the more.

When a class was called John Temple always went out first. As he walked by me he would say, and he had a teacher-defying way of talking under his lips, "Kitty, come and sit by me."

When it was evident where he would choose to sit, there would be a scamper from the feminine side of the house to sit by him. Busying myself, I would wait until the commotion was over, and seat myself as remote as possible. Those who were successful were happy. Those who were outfooted got as near as they could, and John Temple would curl his lip and look at me, when my secret elation at knowing myself preferred would be very great.

We were in the same Virgil class. Now everybody knows that the gods and goddesses were not ladies and gentlemen, and that the Trojans and Greeks were uncomfortably plain of speech, and that there were ladies among the Carthagenians who were very careless of their language. John Temple always looked ahead. He knew about how much we would each have to translate. And if he saw that any disagreeable passage was likely to fall to my share, he would manœuvre some change of seat until he could take the objectionable lines upon himself.

There are plenty of ways in which school-boys can show their chivalrous consideration for girls, and these John Temple always to showed me. It was thoroughly understood there was always some one looking out for Kitty Black. As I was not permitted to go to parties

where there were boys, an arena remained where John Temple could be contended for by others. At school I was supreme.

As I moved, his gaze followed me. When I achieved any honor, no one was so proud as he. There was a stolen word here, a pressure of the hand there. When we played, and no one was so heedless and reckless as I, a protecting arm always stood ready to keep me from harm.

Never did I show any signs of my conquest, although I was fully aware of its value in the eyes of others. Never was I jealous; I was too confident, too assured for jealousy. I often wonder now if I cared for him then. I do not know; but I do know that I lived and fed on his preference. It may have been only vanity.

For three years this lasted, and was a matter of general comment at school. John Temple was always a matter of comment. Dashing girls from other towns came and bid for John Temple's smiles. He gave them now to one, and now to another. Meanwhile, I played tag and ran races, but no one ever succeeded in winning away anything that was mine.

"Are you going to marry Kitty Black when she grows up?" one of the older girls asked.

"Yes."

"I'll bet you don't."

"I'll bet I do. I'll bet you a gold ring that when Kitty Black is eighteen years old she will be my wife."

The school buzzed with this bet. I was not supposed to know it. But I did, and gave no sign. Soon after I was sent to boarding-school. My father had heard with great displeasure of the affair, and did not choose that such thoughts should be put in my head. I was not back again until after I had graduated. It was in summer—a summer of calm starlit nights. The town was full of young people who had put school behind them, and now pressed forward eagerly to taste the cup of joy which life presents but once. Among them was John Temple, even more triumphant than of old, for he wore the all-conquering uniform of a West Point cadet. He

had no rivals. When he appeared, others retired. He took by right, and caused no jealousy. Such was his complete domination.

I saw him first at an evening party. Rumor had engaged him to a young girl of the town who had won him by years of devotion. He had brought her that evening.

There were strangers present, one a gay and handsome Southern girl. He was bending over her when I first saw him. He pretended he did not see me at first. I am not a person that challenges the attention of the room. But I knew that he did see me, and with that subtle, quiet understanding that never had needed signs between us, I knew he would be at my side presently.

His devotion to the girl grew even more marked, but I was not surprised when, although I was deep in conversation with some one else, I felt him take my hand. He drew it in his arm. "Come," he said, and led me on to the long gallery where up and down we paced in the moonlight all the evening.

As we passed the long, open windows I could see within. The girl to whom John Temple was said to be engaged had left the dancers, and two kind girl friends were trying to screen her unhappiness and tearful eyes.

The gay visitor to whom he had been all devotion was laughing still in hard, strained tones, and looking about with wondering eyes; youth is hard and remorseless; I felt no pang. I enjoyed my triumph.

This was the beginning. When I was not, and doubtless making proper occasions, John Temple repaired his omissions and paid court right and left. But when I was present, I was all in all. We sat out dances, and paced the sidewalks, wandering up and down the block with that freedom which village life allows.

"He can't propose to her, because he's engaged to Edith," I heard a voice say one evening.

"That wouldn't be a straw in his way," was the reply.

I heard both indifferently.

I saw Edith grow paler and thinner, and unhappiness settle on her face like disease. I pitied her, only her pretensions to John Temple seemed absurd. He was mine—if I cared to have him.

One evening I was late at a dance. When I came in John Temple was the centre of a group of girls. There was a laughing dispute among them.

"But I have the documents," he said, and pulled from his pocket a time-stained card; "years ago I knew there was a time coming when you would deny your ages, so I took precautions to get them then. I guess I'm equal to the arithmetic."

There was a cry, and hands flung up to seize the card which he quickly restored to his pocket.

"Who would have thought you could have been so sly?"

"What a base advantage of innocent confidence!"

Well as I knew him, that he could so long and secretly cherish such a little scheme was a revelation.

He disentangled himself from them and came to me. After a few languid whirls he said, "Let us leave this." And, as usual, we went out on the gallery, where we sat down on a bench beneath the vines.

John Temple had never made love to me. He treated me with an air of proprietorship, as one might care for a rare vase, or something too delicate and precious for common use. It was so different from the free and easy relations of young people, even when they are in love, that it had a unique and most agreeable value.

"You will always be young to me, Kitty," he said, as we sat down. "In my thoughts you are still a fiery little child."

"Are you going away to-morrow?" he asked after a silence.

"Yes."

"You must not go. I cannot let you go. You always stay so long. Ah, Kitty, you wont go?"

"There are others."

"There is only you, Kitty. Did you ever know that years ago I made a bet about you?"

"Yes, I heard of it."

"The time is up, Kitty; the gage was a ring. I have it here. But I want you to wear it. Where is your dear little hand? Yours? Mine. I can't remember the day when I did not claim it."

I began nervously to pull off my glove, warm and clinging from his strong grasp.

"Where is the ring? I put it here." He began to probe the traditional waistcoat pockets. I turned over the long glove, stripping it from my hand, now half revealed. "Ye gods," he laughed loudly; "I had forgotten; Laura Golden wears that ring. It is Laura's hand that is mine."

She was the Southern girl.

How, I know not, but a diamond bauble changed its place and I tore off my glove. The ring danced in the moonlight, but my heart stood still, stunned by the brutal blow.

"You never wore that ring before," he challenged.

"I only got it to-day."

"What does it mean?"

"That there is some one at home wanting me back."

"You said you were going to Maysville."

"I am for a few days only."

"You have outwitted me."

My heart had grown steadier. I could now ask as well as answer.

"Now tell me why you have taken the trouble, during all these years, to play this little game?"

"When you were a little girl you humiliated me. Niggers, scum, taunted me for years on account of you. I said then I would be revenged, and I never relinquished my purpose."

My inability to understand such vindictiveness brought my head to the aid of my heart. "Do you feel satisfied?" I asked, not without malice.

"You have outwitted me, I said before," he answered sullenly, and I could have told him but for an instant's miscalculation he had had the reward of his years of effort.

"Enough of this," I said. "You have had your little game and I mine. Let us go in."

"Kitty, you are not going; you cannot?" He bent upon me all the fervor of his eloquent eyes.

"Oh, can't I?" I got up.

"There is that between us which has never been said."

"The rest is silence," I answered, and my airy gown slipped through his hands.

I saw him after I went in, with his head bowed in his hands.

"Take me home, Aunt Betty, I'm tired," I pleaded with my gay maiden aunt. As we went out I saw John Temple come in by the window, and as we closed the gate his blond head was drooping over Laura Golden's shoulder.

"Here is your ring, Aunt Betty, it hurts my finger. But you can't tell how I enjoyed wearing it just once."

"I didn't know you were so fond of diamonds, Kitty."

"I am on occasion. This was an occasion."

"Well, I'll leave it to you in my will to remember it by."

"Never!" I shrieked. "Never! I never want to see it again." And I sobbed myself to sleep.

The next day I went to Maysville, ten miles away. The third day John Temple came up and drove by the house, waving his hat out of the carriage window. It was a "protracted spree," Aunt Betty wrote me.

I never saw John Temple again. Whenever I heard of him, he was still treading on women's hearts, and being fed by their devotions. We never either of us married.

Last week I learned he was dead. He had been thrown from his horse on the plains and was killed. He had been drinking.

Long since I lost the power to care. I can only wonder at the prodigality of nature, which can create bodies like that of John Temple, so beautiful, so gracious, so full of charm, and then leave them to perish as should misshapen creatures, by neglecting to provide them with a soul.

The title of the following sketch will probably give a false impression, but it is that of the author, whom her admirers style "the George Sand of Italy." The opportunity to see whether the comparison holds good is given by A. H. Cady, who has rendered it into English for the readers of ROMANCE. All rights of dramatization reserved.

SALVATION.

AFTER the wave of strong passion had passed, in the quiet hours of conversation which followed, when confidences were poured forth with expansive spontaneity, in an intimacy both friendly and loving, Flavia talked willingly of her own childhood, of that joyous time when all was sunshine, kisses, and sugar-plums.

She seemed almost carried away by these memories; and, as if in a dream, with a far-off look in her eyes and her voice trembling with emotion, she told of the happiness with which her mother's love had surrounded her. Then a sudden melancholy quenched the fire of her excitement, her voice grew hoarse, even faint, as she murmured gently:

"Mother....mother...."

Almost as if to rouse herself from this sad oppression, she took Cesare's hands in hers, and, looking into his eyes, said:

"Tell me, love, about yourself."

Cesare smiled, as he puffed away at his cigarette, in the blissful state of fulfilled desires and a contented spirit.

"I was a very healthy child; very noisy and very rough, I fancy, dear. That's all."

"Nothing else?"

"No, darling, nothing else."

"Well, then"—moving her head thoughtfully—"tell me about your child."

Cesare grew serious for an instant and looked at her distrustfully. In Flavia's eyes, though, he saw such

humble curiosity, so much of affectionate interest, that his suspicion vanished. So, with the proud smile of a happy father, he spoke of his boy, who bore the grandfather's name, Paolo, and who would no longer let them call him *bebe*, because he was quite large now, ten years old.

"And has he very blond hair, like you?" asked Flavia, profoundly interested.

"Very blond and curly. He gets so angry when I tell him that he wears a wig. He is very sensitive to ridicule, and doesn't like to be joked with. Grows quite pale, but does not cry. He goes into a corner and thinks; if we speak to him he wont reply. His fits of depression are like those of a man."

"Perhaps he is delicate," she murmured, touched by the account.

"No; too sentimental, if anything. I must cure him of this over-sensitiveness, if possible; otherwise he will be very unhappy. If he allows himself to love too deeply, to desire too much, to suffer for the lack of what he loves and what he desires, it will go hard with him, poor little man!"

A painful silence reigned. The conversation, touching again on passion, had lost the placid calmness of a few moments before. Cesare tried to reopen the discussion about the child, but this grew hazardous; for, with each moment speaking of Paolo the apparition of the mother, the young wife he had deceived, came before his mind's eye. Thus, out of respect to the woman he no longer loved, and in delicacy toward the one he did love, he could not mention the name of the wife in the presence of the mistress. He was silent. Suddenly Flavia rose to her feet, came to his side, and with all the feminine sweetness, the caressing ways, which obtain everything that is wished for, she said:

"Why don't you bring the child to see me?"

The first time that Flavia made this strange request Cesare felt a sensation of repugnance, and replied quickly:

"That's folly!"

But Flavia was not discouraged. Every now and then, when Cesare's tenderness for her seemed almost boundless, she grew gentle, docile, even humble, and begged him to bring the child to her. In vain; he was silent, taciturn, or tried to change the subject. Flavia always returned to it with obstinate persistence. Finally Cesare, annoyed that she did not comprehend the indelicacy of this caprice, for as such he regarded it, replied:

"The mother has the care and the control of the child, and would not wish to send him to see you. You ought to understand that."

A terrible scene followed, in which from one moment to another Flavia reproached herself, then Cesare, for this culpable love of theirs, wept and raged by turns, wrung her hands, cursed her erring existence, and the odious day when they had met. He tried to comfort her; she would not be pacified, but gave vent to the long pent-up sorrow over her false position, humiliating herself even to confessing her remorse, bewailing the domestic peace, the sweet home life—aye, everything which she had renounced for him. Cesare caressed her, murmuring sweet words of comfort the while; then, as she still persisted that all she said was true, gently stroked her hair, as he would that of a sick child, soothing her grief into rest, and finally promised to fetch the child to her very, very soon.

"Will you leave him alone with me, love?"

"Yes, dear; I will leave him with you, if only you will not cry any more."

"Will you leave him with me for one hour?"

"Yes, yes, dear."

"Oh, my love—my dear, dear love, my happiness!" she exclaimed, in calm ecstasy.

"Paolo," said his father, pushing the boy gently before him, "here is the beautiful lady who wanted to see you."

The boy raised his dark eyes to Flavia's face, and smiled sweetly. She clasped her hands with a gesture of surprise,

"How lovely he is—how lovely!" she exclaimed under her breath. Then, in his father's ear:

"Cesare, ask him to kiss me."

"Paolo, will you give this lady a kiss?"

"Yes," replied the child.

With a gentle and courteous movement he took the beautiful jewelled hand and kissed it.

"Like a gallant knight. Bravo, Paolo!" exclaimed the proud father, while Flavia continued to gaze at the child. "Dear," Cesare went on, "will you stay with this lady while I go off for a bit?"

"You will come back soon, papa?"

"Very soon, little man."

Because the child was present these two did not dare touch each other's hands; they exchanged one rapid look. Flavia bowed, took Paolo by the hand and led him into the drawing-room, near an open balcony, as if to see him better. He stood quite erect, in his little suit of velvet, holding tight in his hand his velvet cap.

"You have your father's very eyes," murmured Flavia, taking his hand in hers and caressing it.

"Yes, but my mouth is like mamma's," said the boy, in a tone of pride.

"Don't you like to look like your papa?" she asked, in an uncertain voice.

"Papa is handsome but, mamma is much handsomer. She is beautiful. She has such long, long hair, and, oh! such tiny little hands. Don't you know mamma?"

"No!"

"Why don't you know her?"

"I don't know," she answered, in a low voice, bowing her head, while her eyes filled.

Paolo looked at her inquisitively, and was silent. She rose and went to fetch some bonbons. He declined them, but looked at them as a well-bred child would do, who did not dare to take what he really was longing for.

"Why wont you take them?"

"I think I had better not, thank you."

"But if you like bonbons take them, Paolo. Did they teach you at school to refuse them?"

"No; mamma taught me. I do not go to school."

"Who teaches you your lessons, then?"

"Mamma. She could not be alone from the morning until three o'clock, so she gives me my lessons till noon."

"And at noon?"

"Mamma and I have luncheon together."

"All alone?"

"Papa is never at luncheon. He is too busy, you know. Oh, very, very busy."

A brief silence.

"Take the bonbons, Paolo."

"There are too many," replied Paolo, as a last scruple for declining the sweets.

"Share them with some of your little friends, then."

"I haven't any."

"Whom do you play with, then?"

"With mamma, when she feels like it."

"And doesn't she feel like it always?"

"No."

"Why not?"

The boy looked at her and was silent. An indescribable expression of fear suddenly crossed Flavia's face. But evidently the child knew nothing, for he had not understood the question.

"So you do not amuse yourself much?" she said, recovering herself, and fetching a sigh, as if relieved of a great oppression.

"Oh, yes, I amuse myself. Mamma embroiders, plays on the piano, and I look at picture-books or play with my toys, or look out of the window and watch the people passing up and down the street."

"Always alone?"

"Yes. Papa would be with us, but that he is so busy always. He has so much to do."

"Who tells you that?"

"Mamma."

"Ah!"

"She tells me fairy stories, too, when I am tired and don't know what to do. They are too sad, and make me

cry. Do you know any fairy stories that make one laugh?"

"No, dear. Does your mamma tell you the stories in the evening?"

"Yes, in the evening. I would like to go to the theatre. Papa took mamma and me once; but now he's very busy, and can't go with us any more, so we go to bed early. He comes home very late, oh very late, and walks about softly in the next room, so not to awaken us. But mamma is always awake and hears him. Sometimes I am awake, too. 'There's papa,' she says, in a whisper. Then, when papa comes in to kiss me we shut our eyes and pretend to be asleep."

"And your papa kisses you?"

"Yes. Then he goes out of the room on tiptoe, just as he came in."

"And doesn't he kiss mamma, too?"

"No," answered the child, growing thoughtful.

"So, then, you sleep in your mamma's room?"

"Yes. I did not sleep there before. But papa went off on a journey for a whole month, and mamma, who was afraid to sleep alone, had my crib brought into her room. I've stayed there ever since."

Flavia sunk back on her chair as if she were going to faint. The boy looked at her with his great, honest eyes, surprised. She did not speak, she did not start, nor move, even, and Paolo began to feel afraid of the beautiful, pale lady. He grasped his cap tightly in his hands and wished that his father would return. Finally Flavia moved slightly, raised her head, and such grief was depicted on her face that the child involuntarily stretched out his arms to her as he would to his mother, saying:

"What is the matter?"

She burst into tears as she kissed the lovely, affectionate child, who was so astonished at this outbreak. Her tears bathed Paolo's face and neck.

"Don't cry, dear lady; don't cry like that. It can't be anything."

"No, I will not cry. I will not cry any more. Kiss me once, as—as you would your mamma."

He threw his arms about her neck and kissed her.

"Good-by, dear. Wait here a moment. Your papa will return to fetch you. I am obliged to go out."

"Shall I tell mamma that I have been here?"

"Why?"

"Because papa told me not to do so."

She was thoughtful; then, as if casting away the last doubt:

"Tell her that you have been to see Flavia."

For an instant the beautiful hand rested on the curly head of the child, as if in benediction.

Cesare and Flavia never met again.

The tragedy in this story is so discreetly hidden beneath the learning, philosophy, and the polite amiability of the two cutthroats, that it may be read and enjoyed by the most timid, although it is taken from the "Memoirs of Gabriel Foote, Highwayman," by Arthur Quiller Couch.

THE TWO HOUSEHOLDERS.

I WILL say this—speaking as accurately as a man may so long afterward—that when first I spied the house it put no desire in me but just to give thanks.

For conceive my case. It was near midnight by this; and, ever since dusk, I had been tracking the naked moors afoot, in the teeth of as vicious a nor'wester as ever drenched a man to the skin and then blew the cold home to his marrow. My clothes were sodden; my coat-tails flapped with a noise like pistol-shots; my boots squeaked as I went. Overhead the October moon was in her last quarter, and might have been a slice of finger-nail for all the light she afforded. Two thirds of the time the wrack blotted her out altogether; and I, with my stick clipped tight under my armpit, eyes puckered up, and head bent like a butting ram's, but a little aslant, had to keep my wits agog to distinguish the glimmer of the road from the black heath to the right and left. For three hours I had met neither man nor man's dwelling, and (for all I knew) was desperately lost.

Mainly to allay the stinging of my eyes, I pulled up at last, turned right-about-face, leaned back against the blast with a hand on my hat, and surveyed the blackness I had traversed. It was at this instant that, far away to the left, a point of light caught my notice, faint but steady; and at once I felt sure it burned in the window of a house.

I cut straight across the heather toward the light, risking many quags and pitfalls, and soon a flicker of moonlight gave me a glimpse of the house's outline. It

proved to be a deal more imposing than I looked for—the outline, in fact, of a tall, square barrack, with a cluster of chimneys at either end, like ears, and a high wall, topped by the roofs of some outbuildings, concealing the lower windows. There was no gate in this wall, and presently I guessed the reason. I was approaching the place from behind, and the light came from a back-window on the first floor.

The faintness of the light also was explained by this time. It shone behind a drab-colored blind, and in shape resembled the stem of a wine-glass, broadening out at the foot, an effect produced by the half-drawn curtains within. I came to a halt, waiting for the next ray of moonlight. At the same moment, a rush of wind swept over the chimney-stacks, and on the wind there seemed to ride a human sigh. And then, to my dismay, the light faded from the window.

I was half minded to call out, when it appeared again, this time in two windows—those next on the right to that where it had shown before. Almost at once it increased in brilliance, as if the person who carried it from the smaller room to the larger was lighting more candles. During the minute or more that I stood watching no shadow fell on either blind.

Between me and the wall ran a ditch, into the black obscurity of which the ground at my feet broke sharply away. Setting my back to the storm again, I followed the lip of this ditch around the wall's angle. Here was shelter, and here the ditch seemed to grow shallower. Not wishing, however, to mistake a bed of nettles or any such pitfall for solid earth, I kept pretty wide as I went on. The house was dark on this side, and the wall, as before, had no opening. Close beside the next angle grew a mass of thick gorse bushes, and pushing through these I found myself suddenly on a sound high road, with the wind tearing at me as furiously as ever.

But here was the front; and I now perceived that the surrounding wall advanced some way before the house. So much of it, too, as faced the road had been white-

washed, which made it an easy matter to find the gate. But as I laid my hand on its latch I had a surprise.

A line of paving-stones led from the gate to a heavy porch, and along the wet surface of these fell a streak of light from the front-door, which stood ajar.

That a door should remain six inches open on such a night was astonishing enough, until I entered the court and found it as still as a room, owing to the high wall, and doubtless the porch gave additional protection. But looking up and assuring myself that all the rest of the façade was black as ink, I wondered at the inmates who could be thus careless of their property.

It was here that my professional instincts received the first jog. Abating the sound of my feet on the paving-stones, I went up to the door and pushed it softly. It opened without noise.

I stepped into a fair-sized hall of modern build, paved with red tiles and lit with a small hanging-lamp. To right and left were doors leading to the ground-floor rooms. Along the wall by my shoulder ran a line of pegs, on which hung half a dozen hats and great-coats, every one of clerical shape, and full in front of me a broad staircase ran up, with a staring Brussels carpet, the colors and pattern of which I can recall as well as to-day's breakfast. Under this staircase was set a stand full of walking-sticks and a table littered with gloves, brushes, a hand-bell, a riding-crop, one or two dog-whistles, and a bedroom candle with tinder-box beside it. This, with one notable exception, was all the furniture.

The exception—which turned me cold—was the form of a yellow mastiff dog, curled on a mat beneath the table. The arch of his back was toward me, and one forepaw lay over his nose in a natural posture of sleep. I leaned back on the wainscoting, with my eyes tightly fixed on him and my thoughts flying back, with something of regret, to the storm I had come through.

But a man's habits are not easily denied. At the end of three minutes the dog had not moved, and I was down on the door-mat unlacing my soaked boots.

Slipping them off and taking them in my left hand, I stood up and tried a step toward the stairs, with eyes alert for any movement of the mastiff; but he never stirred.

I was glad enough, however, on reaching the stairs to find them newly built and the carpet thick. Up I went, with a glance at every step for the table which now hid the brute's form from me, and never a creak did I wake out of that staircase till I was almost at the first landing, when my toe caught a loose stair-rod and rattled it in a way that stopped my heart for a moment, and then set it going in double-quick time.

I stood still, with a hand on the rail. My eyes were now on a level with the floor of the landing, out of which branched two passages—one by my right hand, the other to the left—at the foot of the next flight, so placed that I was gazing down the length of it. And almost at the end there fell a parallelogram of light across it from an open door.

A man who has once felt it knows there is only one kind of silence that can fitly be called "dead." This is only to be found in a great house at midnight. I declare that, for a few seconds after I rattled the stair-rod, you might have cut the silence with a knife. If the house held a clock it ticked inaudibly.

Upon this silence, at the end of a minute, broke a light sound—the clink, clink of a decanter on the rim of a wine-glass. It came from the room where the light was.

Now, perhaps, it was the very thought of liquor that put warmth into my cold bones. It is certain that all of a sudden I straightened my back, took the remaining stairs at two strides, and walked down the passage as bold as brass, without caring a jot for the noise I made.

In the doorway I halted. The room was long, lined for the most part with books bound in what they called "divinity calf," and littered with papers like a barrister's table on assize day. Before the fireplace, where a few coals burned sulkily, was drawn a leather elbow-

chair, and beside it, on the corner of a writing table, were set an unlit candle and a pile of manuscripts. At the opposite end of the room a curtained door led, as I guessed, to the chamber that I had first seen illuminated. All this I took in with the tail of my eye, while staring straight in front, where, in the middle of a great square of carpet between me and the windows, was a table with a red cloth upon it. On this cloth were a couple of wax candles, lit, in silver stands, a tray and a decanter, three parts full of brandy. And between me and the table stood a man.

He stood sideways, leaning a little back, as if to keep his shadow off the threshold, and looked at me over his left shoulder—a bald, grave man, slightly under the common height, with a long clerical coat of preposterous fit hanging loosely from his shoulders, a white cravat, black breeches and black stockings. His feet were loosely thrust into carpet-slippers. I judged his age at fifty or thereabout; but his face rested in the shadow, and I could only note a pair of eyes, very small and alert, twinkling above a large expanse of cheek.

He was lifting a wine-glass from the table at the moment when I appeared, and it trembled now in his right hand. I heard a spilled drop or two fall on the carpet, and this was all the evidence he showed of discomposure.

Setting the glass back, he felt in his breast-pocket for a handkerchief, failed to find one, and rubbed his hands together to get the liquor off his fingers.

"You startled me," he said, in a matter-of-fact tone, turning his eyes upon me, as he lifted his glass again and emptied it; "how did you find your way in?"

"By the front door," said I, wondering at his unconcern.

He nodded his head slowly.

"Ah, yes; I forgot to lock it. You came to steal, I suppose?"

"I came because I'd lost my way. I've been travelling this God-forsaken moor since dusk——"

"With your boots in your hand?" he put in, quietly.

"I took them off out of respect to the yellow dog you keep."

"He lies in a natural attitude, eh?"

"You don't tell me he was stuffed?"

The old man's eyes beamed with contemptuous pity.

"You are indifferently sharp, my dear sir, for a housebreaker. Come in. Set down those convicting boots, and don't drip pools of water in the very doorway, of all places. If I must entertain a burglar, I prefer him tidy."

He walked to the fire, picked up a poker and knocked the coals into a blaze. This done, he turned round on me, with the poker still in his hand. The serenest gravity sat on his large, hale features.

"Why have I done this?" he asked.

"I suppose to get possession of the poker."

"Quite right. May I inquire your next move?"

"Why," said I, feeling in my tail pocket, "I carry a pistol."

"Which I suppose to be damp?"

"By no means. I carry it, as you see, in an oil-cloth case."

He stooped and laid the poker carefully in the fender.

"That is a stronger card than I possess. I might urge that, by pulling the trigger, you would certainly alarm the house and the neighborhood, and put a halter round your neck. I say I might urge this, and assume you to be an intelligent auditor. But it strikes me as safer to assume you capable of using a pistol with effect at three paces. With what might happen subsequently I will not pretend to be concerned. It is sufficient that I dislike the notion of being perforated. The fate of your neck—" he waved a hand. "Well, I have known you for just five minutes, and feel but a moderate interest in your neck. As for the inmates of this house, it will refresh you to hear that there are none. I have lived here for two years with a butler and female cook, both of whom I dismissed yesterday at a minute's notice for conduct which I will not shock your ears by explicitly naming. Suffice it to say I carried them off yesterday

to my parish church, two miles away, married them, and dismissed them in the vestry without characters. I wish you had known that butler—but, excuse me: with the information I have supplied, you ought to find no difficulty in fixing the price you will take to clear out of my house instanter."

"Sir," I answered, "I have held a pistol at one or two heads in my time, but never at one stuffed with nobler indiscretion. Your chivalry does not, indeed, disarm me, but prompts me to desire more of your acquaintance. I have found a gentleman and must sup with him before I make terms."

The address seemed to please him. He shuffled across the room to a sideboard and produced a plate of biscuits, another of almonds and dried raisins, a glass, and two decanters.

"Sherry and Madeira," he said; "there is also a cold pie in the larder, if you care for it."

"A biscuit will serve," I replied; "to tell the truth, I'm more for the bucket than the manger, as the grooms say; and, by your leave, the brandy you were tasting just now is more to my mind than wine."

"There is no water handy."

"There was plenty out-of-doors to last me with this bottle."

I pulled over a chair, laid my pistol on the table, and held out the glass for him to fill. Having done so, he helped himself to a glass and chair, and sat down, facing me.

"I was talking just now of my late butler," he began, with a sip at his brandy; "has it struck you that, when confronted with moral delinquency, I am apt to let my indignation get the better of me?"

"Not at all," I answered heartily, refilling my glass.

It appeared that another reply would have pleased him better.

"H'm! I was hoping that, perhaps, I had visited his offence too strongly. As a clergyman, you see, I was bound to be severe; but, upon my word, sir, since he went I have felt like a man who has lost a limb."

He drummed with his fingers on the cloth for a few moments, and went on,—

"One has a natural disposition to forgive butlers—Pharaoh, for instance, felt it. There hovers around butlers that peculiar atmosphere which Shakespeare noticed as encircling kings—an atmosphere in which common ethics lose their pertinence. But mine was a rare bird—a black swan among butlers. He was more than a butler; he was a quick and brightly gifted man. Of the accuracy of his taste and the unusual scope of his endeavor you will be able to form some opinion when I assure you he modelled himself upon me."

I bowed over my brandy.

"I am a scholar, yet I employed him to read aloud to me and derived pleasure from his intonation. I talk as a scholar, yet he learned to answer me in language as precise as my own. My cast-off garments fitted him not more irreproachably than did my amenities of manner. Divest him of his tray and you would find his mode of entering a room hardly distinguishable from my own—the same urbanity, the same alertness of carriage, the same superfine deference toward the weaker sex. All—all my idiosyncrasies I saw reflected in this my mirror; and can you doubt that I was gratified? He was my *alter ego*, which, by the way, makes it the more extraordinary that it should have been necessary to marry him to the cook."

"Look here," I broke in, "you want a butler?"

"Oh, you really grasp that fact, do you?" he retorted.

"And you wish to get rid of me as soon as may be?"

"I hope there is no impoliteness in complimenting you on your discernment."

"Your two wishes," said I, "may be reconciled. Let me cease to be your burglar, and let me continue here as your butler."

He leaned back, spreading out the fingers of each hand as if the table's edge was a harpsichord and he stretching octaves upon it.

"Believe me," I went on, "you might do worse. I have been a demy of Magdalen College, Oxford, in my

time, and retain some Greek and Latin. I'll undertake to read the Fathers with an accent that shall not offend you. My knowledge of wine is none the worse for having been cultivated in other men's cellars. Moreover, you shall engage the ugliest cook in Christendom, so long as I'm your butler. I've taken a liking to you—that's flat—and I apply for the post."

"I give forty pounds a year," said he.

"And I'm cheap at that price."

He filled up his glass, looking up at me while he did so with the air of one digesting a problem. From first to last his face was grave as a judge's.

"We are too impulsive, I think," was his answer, after a minute's silence, "and your speech smacks of the amateur. You say, 'Let me cease to be your burglar and let me be your butler.' The mere aspiration is respectable; but a man might as well say, 'Let me cease to write poems, let me paint pictures.' And truly, sir, you impressed me as no expert in your present trade, but a journeyman house-breaker, if I may say so."

"On the other hand," I argued, "consider the moderation of my demands. That alone should convince you of my desire to turn over a new leaf. I ask for a month's trial; if, at the end of that time, I don't suit, you shall say so, and I'll march from your door with nothing in my pocket but my month's wages. Be hanged, sir! but when I reflect on the amount you'll have to pay to get me to face to-night's storm again, you seem to be getting off dirt cheap!" cried I, slapping my palm on the table.

"Ah, if you had only known Adolphus!" he exclaimed.

Now, the third glass of clean spirits had always a deplorable effect on me. It turns me from bright to black, from lightness of spirits to extreme sulkiness. I have done more wickedness over this third tumbler than in all the other states of comparative inebriety within my experience. So now I glowered at my companion and rapped out a curse.

"Look here, I don't want to hear any more of Adolphus, and I've a pretty clear notion of the game you're playing. You want to make me drunk, and you're ready to sit prattling there till I drop under the table."

"Do me the favor to remember that you came and are staying at your own invitation. As for the brandy, I would remind you that I suggested a milder drink. Try some Madeira."

He handed me the decanter as he spoke, and I poured out a glass.

"Madeira!" said I, taking a gulp; "ugh! it's the commonest Marsala!"

I had no sooner said the words than he rose up and stretched a hand gravely across to me.

"I hope you will shake it," he said, "though, as a man who after three glasses of neat spirit can distinguish between Madeira and Marsala, you have every right to refuse me. Two minutes ago, you offered to become my butler, and I demurred. I now beg you to repeat that offer. Say the word, and I employ you gladly; you shall even have the second decanter (which contains genuine Madeira) to take to bed with you."

We shook hands on our bargain, and, catching up a candlestick, he led the way from the room.

Picking up my boots, I followed him along the passage and down the silent staircase. In the hall he paused to stand on tiptoe and turn up the lamp which was burning low. As he did so, I found time to fling a glance at my old enemy, the mastiff. He lay as I had first seen him—a stuffed dog, if ever there was one. "Decidedly, thought I, "my wits are to seek, to-night"; and with the same sudden suspicion made me turn to my conductor, who had advanced to the left-hand door and was waiting for me, with a hand on the knob.

"One moment," I said; "this is all very pretty, but how am I to know you're not sending me to bed while you fetch in all the country-side to lay me by the heels?"

"I'm afraid," was his answer, "you must be content with my word, as a gentleman, that never, to-night or

hereafter, will I breathe a syllable about the circumstances of your visit. However, if you choose, we will return upstairs."

"No; I'll trust you," said I; and he opened the door.

It led into a broad passage, paved with slate, upon which three or four rooms opened. He paused by the second and ushered me into a sleeping-chamber, which, though narrow, was comfortable enough—a vast improvement, at any rate, on the mumper's lodgings I had been used to for many months past.

"You can undress here," he said; "the sheets are aired, and if you'll wait a moment I'll fetch a night-shirt—one of my own."

"Sir, you heap coals of fire on me."

"Believe me that for ninety-nine of your qualities I do not care a tinker's curse; but as a man who, after three tumblers of neat brandy, can tell Marsala from Madeira, you are to be taken care of."

He shuffled away, but came back in a couple of minutes with the night-shirt.

"Good night," he called to me, slinging it in at the door; and without giving me time to return the wish, went his way upstairs.

Now it might be supposed I was only too glad to toss off my clothes and climb into the bed I had so unexpectedly acquired a right to. But, as a matter of fact, I did nothing of the kind. Instead, I drew on my boots and sat on the bed's edge, blinking at my candle till it died down in its socket, and afterward at the purple square of window as it slowly changed to gray with the coming of dawn. I was cold to the heart, and my teeth chattered with an ague. Certainly I never suspected my host's word; but was even occupied in framing good resolutions and shaping out an excellent future, when I heard the front-door gently pulled to and a man's footsteps moving quietly to the gate.

The treachery knocked me in a heap for the moment. Then, leaping up and flinging my door wide, I stumbled through the uncertain light of the passage into the front hall.

There was a fan-shaped light over the door, and the place was very still and gray. A thought, or rather a sudden, prophetic guess at the truth, made me turn to the figure of the mastiff curled under the hall-table.

I laid my hand on the scruff of his neck. He was quite limp, and my fingers sank into the flesh on either side of the vertebra. Digging them deeper, I dragged him out into the middle of the hall and pulled the front door open to see the better.

His throat was gashed from ear to ear.

How many seconds passed after I dropped the senseless lump on the floor and before I made another movement, it would puzzle me to say. Twice I stirred a foot as if to run out at the door. Then, changing my mind, I stepped over the mastiff and ran up the staircase.

The light no longer shone out into the left-hand passage; but, groping down it, I found the study door open, as before, and passed in. A sick light stole through the blinds—enough for me to distinguish the glasses and decanters on the table and find my way to the curtain that hung before the room where the light had first attracted me.

I pushed the curtain aside, paused for a moment, and listened to the violent beat of my heart, then felt for the door-handle and turned it.

All I could see at first was that the chamber was small; next, that the light patch in a line with the window was the white coverlet of a bed; and next, that somebody, or something, lay on the bed.

I listened again. There was no sound in the room, no heart beating but my own. I reached out a hand to pull up the blind, and drew it back again. I dared not.

The daylight grew, minute by minute, on the dull parallelogram of the blind, and, minute by minute, that horrible thing on the bed took something of distinctness.

The strain beat me at last. I fetched a veritable yell to give myself courage, and, reaching for the cord, pulled up the blind as fast as it would go.

The face on the pillow was that of an old man—a

face waxen and peaceful, with quiet lines about the mouth and eyes, and long lines of gray hair falling back from the temples. The body was turned a little on one side and one hand lay outside the bed-clothes in a very natural manner. But there were two dark spots on the coverlet.

Then I knew I was face to face with the real householder; and it flashed on me that I had been indiscreet in taking service as his butler, and that I knew the face his ex-butler wore.

And, being by this time awake to the responsibilities of the post, I quitted it three steps at a time, not once looking behind me. Outside the house the storm had died, and white sunlight broke over the sodden moors. But my bones were cold, and I ran faster and faster.

There have been many strange records of murders committed, but none more thrilling and more unusual in circumstance and detail than this which was told by G. W. B. in the *Yankee Blade* and is here republished for the readers of ROMANCE.

THE FINGER OF FIRE.

IMAGINE a mob of men as wild as a pack of hungry wolves whose frenzy has been fired by the scent of blood. And in its midst a helpless fellow-being, bound hands and feet, with the noose of the lynch-men around his neck.

I came suddenly upon such a scene in one of the settlements on the Rio Grande, whither I had journeyed to find a brother whom I had not seen for many years.

As I reined up my horse near the crowd and glanced over the exciting spectacle, an involuntary cry left my lips, as I recognized in the victim him whom I had come so far to see.

He saw and knew me instantly, and, though no word came from him, his pale, mute lips appealed to my heart for help.

My appearance caused a hesitation on the part of the lynch-leaders.

I quickly learned that a man, a stranger in those parts, had been killed that morning near a small body of water a short distance from the settlement, and that my brother had been caught in the very act of striking the death blow.

Not one of the spectators seemed to have any doubt of his guilt; but who is so hardened as to condemn his own brother?

I shuddered as I realized Almont's peril, and in my own heart judged him innocent of any crime.

"He is my brother!" I cried.

"Hark!" shouted one of the onlookers, "the brother

of the murdered man is here for justice. Up with him, boys!"

"Hold!" I commanded, rising in my stirrups as I spoke, "blood calls for blood! Let me have hold of that rope!"

The mistake in my identity had suggested a way in which I might enable my brother to escape, and I resolved to attempt it at whatever risk. Fortunately there was little family resemblance between us.

Urging my horse forward the crowd parted, allowing me to reach his side, when I dismounted, ostensibly to examine the slipping-noose.

"It will do," I said, loud enough to be heard by all. "Now help me lift him on the back of my horse. We want to do this job in some shape."

Willing ones sprang to my assistance, but in the brief interval I cut the prisoner's bonds so they held only by a thread, and arranged the noose so it could be thrown off as soon as his arms were free.

I knew few horses could match mine in speed, and once he had cleared the throng, my brother would be comparatively safe.

He understood my intentions and the moment we lifted him upon the horse he wrenched his arms free, threw off the noose, dropped into the saddle, and giving the animal a smart blow, dashed through the crowd like a whirlwind.

"Fools! bunglers!" I yelled, "he will escape! Quick, a horse!"

The affair was done and over so suddenly that I was dazed, bewildered myself, and before the spectators could give pursuit—fortunately horses were not handy—my brother had gained a safe distance.

Of course there was loud cursing over his escape, but I appeared so anxious for his recapture, no blame was attached to me. To carry out the deception I had the body of the stranger carefully buried, and remained in the place until I deemed it safe to depart.

It was nearly a month before I met my brother, and then he thanked me with tears in his eyes for my dar-

ing assistance in his escape from the lynchers. To my surprise, however, he evaded the subject of the murder, saying simply that no crime had been committed. I did not feel like pressing the matter, so the affair was not mentioned again, though it has haunted my mind ever since.

Last week my brother died with no kindred near him, and to-day's mail has brought me a manuscript containing a startling revelation.

In justice to my brother's name, as well as my own satisfaction, I am prompted to give to the public one of the strangest confessions ever made. The following is his account as he wrote it for me:

"When this is read I shall have passed beyond the tribunal of man, so I wish to impress upon you that I am about to record faithfully an experience which I sincerely hope will fall to the lot of no other person.

"I was alone in my private room at my stopping-place in Steadwood late one dark, stormy night when I heard a rap upon the door which I fancied at first was but the wind shaking it on the hinges. But it was repeated louder than before. I bade the applicant, whoever he might be, to come in, without looking up from the book which held my attention.

"A moment later the door was flying open, and with the gust of wind which sent every light object in the room flying topsy-turvy, a man entered the apartment with quick, cat-like steps.

"'Pardon me for the unreasonable hour at which I call,' he said, in a clear, crisp tone; 'but I suppose doctors get used to all sorts of calls.'

"'Certainly,' I replied, I fear somewhat impatiently, as he had interrupted me at a time when I did not like to be disturbed. 'What can I do for you?'

"'Oh, I do not come for professional assistance,' he hastened to say, evidently reading my thoughts. 'Mine is strictly a business call. Are you at liberty for a few minutes?'

"'Yes; but as the hour is late and I am not through

with my investigations yet, I trust you will be as brief as possible.'

"'I had looked the man over carefully while speaking, and I must confess his appearance made me feel uneasy, though he seemed in every way a gentleman.

"'It will do your mind good to rest from your work a few minutes,' said my visitor; 'and I trust you will be more interested in what I offer as it concerns you more directly. Are we likely to be interrupted here?'

"Upon assuring him we were reasonably sure of being undisturbed, he resumed:

"'It is necessary we should be, and with your permission I will lock your door for a few minutes.'

"He must have seen my look of surprise, perhaps I might say alarm, for as he turned back to sink into the nearest chair, he said:

"'Do not be concerned, for I am neither a fool nor a madman. But that which I wish to say must reach no other ears.

"'Dr. Bartlow, pardon me for not introducing myself before. My name is Morris Wayland and I am a professor of science.'

"I bowed, too confused to be surprised that he should know my identity so well. His next words, however, aroused me from the lethargy into which his presence had seemed to plunge me.

"'Dr. Bartlow, how much are you worth?'

"'Enough to make life comfortable for myself,' I replied. 'If you have no more important question than that, our interview might as well come to an end at once.'

"'Pardon me, I will come to business. As I told you, I am a professor of science, and I have made a discovery which is worth millions of dollars—yes, sir, millions!

"'I need not tell you of the anxious days and sleepless nights it has cost me. No matter; I have succeeded at last! And you are the first man whom I have ever approached with my secret. I did not do that until I was satisfied you were the safest one I could find.'

"As he spoke, he opened a small travelling bag which he carried, and took out three or four phials to place upon the table.

"'Education based upon scientific research,' he resumed, 'has made a startling advance within the past few years. But no man has gone farther into the unfathomable depths than myself. I see you have a basin of water here: you will pardon me if I appropriate it to my own use.'

"I bowed in acquiescence, too much surprised to speak, as I tried in vain to understand what sort of a person I had in my late visitor.

"He quickly unsealed one of the phials and poured its contents into the basin of water. Then from another he sifted a bluish colored powder upon the surface of the liquid, which no sooner had it touched the other than it began to hiss, foam, and sparkle, until there came a report like a pistol shot and a column of lurid flames leaped up to the ceiling!

"I started back with a cry of terror.

"'Don't be alarmed,' he assured me with a smile; '*the water will soon burn out!*'

"The fire soon began to grow pale and to diminish in height, when it finally died out altogether and I saw that the basin was empty!

"'How much do you think that secret is worth?' asked my visitor, still showing his white teeth between his parted lips.

"'Man or devil!' I cried, 'what do you mean?'

"'Sit down and be composed and I will quickly explain!' Then as I sank into the nearest seat at a loss what to do or say, he continued:

"'Seeing is believing, so I have shown to you what I can do to impress upon you more deeply the power that I possess. You have seen that basin of water burn like so much oil, and now you will believe me when I tell you that I have unlocked one of nature's great secrets, and that the key lies in that small phial.'

"His demoniacal smile as he spoke made me shudder.

"'I do not understand you,' I faltered. 'If you mean that you can burn water—'

"'Haven't I done it?' he cried. 'Why, man alive! don't you realize the importance of that secret? In those phials are held the component agents able to separate the constituent parts of water and, freeing the same, set them at war with each other, which must result in combustion and total annihilation.

"'Think of that and realize that I hold in my hand the destiny of the world. Let me throw ever so little of these wonderful properties into the Gulf of Mexico, and dare you contemplate the result? In one instant a nucleus of fire would be formed to grow swiftly in size, separating the gases of water and feeding upon them, until the shores of Texas and Mexico would be wrapped in a sheet of flame.

"'No deluge that ever drowned the world could extinguish the conflagration, but would rather transport the fiery legions to the very pillars of the heavens. And it would spread from shore to shore, and from ocean to ocean, until it had enfolded the globe in its seething embrace. Every creature of the sea, the air, and the land would perish; aye, the earth itself would melt into fervent heat.'

"During his startling speech he had worked himself into a fearful frenzy, to fix his intense gaze upon me as he concluded, with a light that burned into my inmost being. I felt I was in the presence of a madman.

"'Oh, well,' I said, with what calmness I could command, 'we wont anticipate so dreadful a catastrophe as you so vividly describe, but it is evident you have made a remarkable discovery. I am anxious to know just how you accomplish it.'

"'Which is my secret,' he said, with another smile, and I saw that my dispassionate speech had had a soothing effect upon him. The man was evidently sane except upon that one subject.

"'You are the most sensible man I have met,' he soon resumed, 'and I am going to impart enough of my

secret to you so you will act with good faith in assisting me in a direction where I am powerless.

"'It needs not my words to tell you that water is composed of two gases, hydrogen and oxygen, in parts as one to eight. United in that proportion these elements are impervious to fire. Every schoolboy knows that. But mix them in any other proportion, and heat, flame, combustion is the immediate consequence.

"'Now I have discovered the key which unlocks the affinity holding together the constituent parts of water. A few grains of this powder is sufficient to dismember its warlike elements, when the funeral pyre of the human race is kindled as far as this planet is concerned.'

"'Impossible!' I could not help exclaiming. 'God in his infinite wisdom never created a world so beautiful as this and then placed in the hands of its subjects the means of its destruction.'

"'Poor fool!' he said, compassionately. 'You forget that the moon is but a fire-extinguished world; that planets and stars without number are the charred remains of what were once scenes of life and beauty; that the sun is a molten mass of heat; that He has said in His own word in the end "the heavens shall be folded together like a scroll, the elements to melt with fervent heat."

"'Our greatest scientists have dreamed, ay, even hinted, of what has been left to me to bring to realization.

"'You see this phial, it contains potassium. It needs not me to tell a man of your information the result when this is brought into contact with water. It ignites instantly. This powder here, the secret of whose compound is known only to me, contains properties which instantly decompose the watery elements. The moment the oxygen is free the potassium ignites it and the work of fiery destruction is begun.

"'You betray a look of doubt. Perhaps you think that this action will be merely local, that the properties will quickly burn out, and in consequence the fire dies

for the want of sustenance. If so you err. The properties of this powder are self-generating and as long as the water lasts must of necessity continue their work of decomposition, the oxygen continually feeding the flames.

"'Get me another basin of water. I want to demonstrate it more clearly to you.'

"I obeyed him without a word, my mind busy all the while trying to devise the best course of action for me. Perhaps the man was not really dangerous as he was then, but I knew not how his mania would develop.

"As he had done before, he turned the potassium into the basin and then sifted in a certain amount of the powder. The hissing and fuming quickly began, followed by a sharp report, when a column of fire again sprang up, which lasted until the water was consumed.

"'You see my first trial was no illusion,' he said, turning to me. 'What I have done once I can do every time.'

"'It is a terrible thing!' I exclaimed with a shudder. 'But why have you come to me?'

"'Because the secret is worth money to me. But when I approach men they call me mad and will not listen. They will believe you, and when you have proved what I can do they will gladly pay me my price. Then I will divide with you and we shall both be rich, you to live at your ease, and I to continue my investigations. Will you help me? and he caught me by the arm with a clutch I seem to feel now.

"'Help you?' I asked in a husky voice. 'Would you jeopardize the lives of the whole human family for a few paltry dollars? A man of your great intellect and research should be above——'

"'You still doubt my ability to do what I claim,' he interrupted. 'Perhaps in the open air you think I would fail. I saw to-day a grand sheet of water for a trial. Come with me and I will astonish even you. See! the storm has cleared away and the day is breaking.'

"I was puzzled what to do. There was no one in the

house upon whom I could call for assistance, but out of doors I might escape the man, whom I must confess I feared. So I consented to accompany him.

"The morning light was fast dispelling the shadows of night and storm, and we had no difficulty in making our way to the little body of water quite hemmed in by the mountains and forest. My companion, as if fearing I would attempt to escape, had not taken his gaze from me since we had left the house.

"'There is a good place to test our work,' he declared, pointing to a small pool of water formed in a depression of the earth by the late storm.

"Without waiting for my reply, he threw some of the potassium and powder into the water. The result was startling to me, though I had anticipated the consequence.

"The report was deafening and the flames seemed to leap to the sky, illuminating the night scene with a ghastly light. But as startling as was the light of the burning water, the appearance of my companion, who had seemed to be suddenly transformed into a demon, was more terrible.

"'See! see!' he cried, dancing to and fro with fiendish glee, 'it burns, will burn, till the pool is dry! What do you think of my secret now? Do I not hold the key to all life? Oh! I feel like a god, and all men are but worms crawling at my feet! See the flames leap higher and higher.

"'Now let me drop the same agents which set that pool on fire into this lake, and the result will be the same; ay, the same, only a million times more grand, for the fire will follow the river to the gulf, and thence to the oceans, to envelop the entire world in its blazing sheets! What a sight for the gods to witness!'

"He gesticulated fiercely, and reached one arm out over the water as if to drop the infernal powder upon its placid bosom, his wild-looking figure lit by the transplendant glow of the burning pool; I gazed with awe upon him, realizing only too well the terrible earnestness of his tone.

"'Wait!' I cried hoarsely, 'you forget the money. Your secret is worth——'

"'Bah! Who prates of money with a cringing world at his feet?' he shrieked. 'They laughed at me, now let their tears put out the flames my hand has kindled! See! the potassium! it fumes! hisses! dances upon the water! Now the pow——'

"'Imagine, who can, the horror of my situation. The blood seemed to freeze in my veins. My limbs seemed paralyzed. But I quickly overcame the lethargy. The life of every being in the world was in my hands. Nerving myself for the blow, I felled the mad scientist dead at my feet. At that moment the fire behind me expired. The world was saved.

"You know the rest. I was discovered in the act of dealing the fatal blow by men who could not understand the immeasurable deed I had done. You saved my life. In the sight of God I feel that I have committed no crime; but I shall die easier knowing that when I am gone the truth will be known to the world. My conscience is clear, and yet the secret has pointed at my every action like a Finger of Fire."

History furnishes no precedent in the rise of cities for the following situation. But it has its humors as well as its perplexities, and these are described in picturesque, idiomatic English by William Perry Brown in the *Yankee Blade.*

HE HAD THE BULGE.

THREE things recently happened at Squolhollow which had never come to pass there before. It had been born anew, through legislative incorporation, into a full-fledged city; it had erected a new jail, and it was head over heels in debt.

In the glory of new existence, official heads swelled rapidly. The mayor and council were soon obliged to have larger hats, while as for the new city marshal, Solomon in all his glory took a back seat as compared with him. At least, that is the way Pete Langhorn felt, as he smoothed himself in his new blue regimentals, and if he did not know his own feelings, who else could?

But the city, like the whilsome village, remained perversely peaceable. For a month or so the new jail stood without an occupant. Pete was in despair, especially as the emoluments of his office depended largely upon fees. Fees would not come in without arrests, and as yet Pete had swung his baton only upon the empty air.

"If some one don't do something pretty quick," he growled one evening, as he watched a down freight train slow up in passing the Squolhollow station, "blame me if I don't arrest myself!"

But at that very moment fate was prepared to be kind. A box car slid open, and a man plunked himself almost at the city marshal's feet. He was battered, and tattered, frowsy and red. Filth enveloped him like a garment, he reeled as he walked, and his breath suggested rum, garlic, and garbage.

"Stealing rides, eh?" said Pete, as he collared the

man. "Well you've lit outer that cyar into the wrong town."

Then he walked him off to jail.

In the morning the mayor, wearing the first blithe smile which his official countenance had worn in a week, fined Bunkdown Bob fifty dollars for vagrancy, with the alternative of six months in jail.

Pete waltzed him back to the new iron-grated cage, as gayly as if he were accompanying an angel back to St. Peter's gate.

"Tell you what, boys," said he that night to a group of political chums. "Jed Rakes" (the jailer) "'lowed he'd got a sinecure. I reckon I've showed him a little different. That fellar can't pay a five cent fine. He'll serve his time, an Jed's wife'll have to cook his vittles. Tell you what, Squolhollow's no place for tramps, outsider our new jail."

As days rolled by, however, Bunkdown Bob made himself comfortable. Three warm meals a day, a dry bed to sleep in, no work to do, and winter coming on, presented a combination of fortune's favors hitherto as inaccessible as it was alluring.

When his first month of official service was up, Jailer Rakes walked round to the city treasurer's office, and presented his account for feeding and caring for the prisoner.

"It's all right, I reckon," quoth that official, smiling blandly, "but you'll have to wait on us a little. City government is an expensive luxury for such a burgh as this, but later on we'll liquidate. Take good care of your prisoner. Squolhollow's going to boom, and we want everything to look fat and sassy."

Jailer Rakes jammed his hands deep down in his pockets, and went back immersed in cogitation.

"Rachel," said he to his wife, "we've got to wait on this blamed town another month for my money. Don't you give that fellow but two meals a day from this on."

Rachel nodded, but kept up the usual number, for she was kind-hearted, and hated to break Bunkdown Bob's heart by paralyzing his stomach.

When month number two was up, Jailer Rakes again presented himself for payment.

"Good Lord, man!" snapped out the treasurer, for he was mad on his own account now, 'how can I pay you when I can't pay myself? There aint a blanked nickel to the city's credit yet, and what's more, I'm afraid there wont be before you and I go to the poor-house."

"Why the—look here! I can't live and keep the jail on wind. Aint some of the other fellows got their pay yet?"

"No. Pete Langhorn wants to resign, and Mayor Doolittle swears he'll sue the town for his'n."

"Shoot me if I don't turn the prisoner loose!" said Mr. Rakes.

And so he attempted to, but Bunkdown Bob refused to be turned loose.

"Do yer think I'm a plum fool?" quoth he, thrusting his head out from under the warm blankets in his bunk. "Here it is almost Christmas, cold as blue blazes, and a foot of snow on the ground. I've got four months to sarve and I'm goin' to sarve it—see?"

Then he curled himself up for another snooze. Mr. Rakes went to the mayor.

"I'm goin' to resign," said he. "Living on nothing and boarding yourself is an awful responsibilty. That cussed tramp up there is eating me out of house and home."

"Turn him loose."

"He wont go. Swears he'll serve his time, and that I've got to feed him. Yet what can I do, if the infernal town wont feed me?"

In this perplexity the city solicitor was consulted.

"Can't I kick the fellow out?" asked Mr. Rakes after the situation had been explained.

"Yes, you could, but suppose the fellow brought a suit against you for assault, and against the city for damages for breach of contract? We fellows wont draw any pay for several months yet, that's flat. And we can't fatten this lazy lout until spring without a

dollar, nor we can't turn him out. I don't see but what we'll have to compromise."

The next morning a group of three presented themselves before Bunkdown Bob, hats in hand, and with the humility of the impecunious.

"Wot are yer givin' us?" exclaimed Bob, with his nose in the air, after he had heard the city's case stated. "Do yer think I'm goin' to turn out sech weather as this?"

"Come now," said the solicitor airily. "We can make it worth your while. How much'll you take to quietly abscond by the next down freight that comes along?"

"One thousand dollars—"

"Why, man, you're crazy. You're lucky to get off as it is. Take a dollar and make yourself scarce."

But Bob knew how to haggle, and came down to one hundred only after an hour of hot argument. The city officials nearly bankrupted themselves to raise the sum, and breathed freely only when Bunkdown Bob saluted the town from the tail end of a cattle car, as it rolled away,—

"So long, gents," he called to the mayor, who had furtively seen him off. "Look for me back next fall."

"If he shows up again in a century we'll murder him," quoth the city's head.

"Amen!" ejaculated Jailer Rakes.

The following is a sketch in *genre* by Guy de Maupassant, profound in its penetration, exquisite in its pathos, and as perfect in its fidelity to life as an old Dutch painting. It has been rendered into English for ROMANCE by Isabel Macdonald.

QUEEN HORTENSE.

THEY called her Queen Hortense in Argenteuil. No one knew why. Perhaps because she spoke with authority like an officer in command, or because she was big, bony, and imperious. Possibly, because she governed a small kingdom of dumb creatures, hens, dogs, cats, canary birds, parrots,—all things dear to an old maid's heart. She ruled these, her subjects, with a rod of iron; she was not given to any weakness of pet names, or loving, caressing words, such as flow so easily from the lips of most women. On the contrary, she governed with authority; she reigned absolutely.

She was the typical old maid, harsh of voice, stiff of mien; she brooked neither contradiction, replies, hesitation, illness, nor fatigue. She herself was never known to complain, never heard to regret anything, never to envy any one. "Every one his day," she said with the conviction of a fatalist.

She never went to church, despised the priests, barely believed in a God, and hesitated not to express her contempt for all religious observances.

During the thirty years that she lived in the little house, with its tiny garden in front, she had altered nothing. The only change ever made was the implacable dismissal of her little servants when they reached their twenty-first year. There were no futile tears nor regrets wasted over her numerous dogs, cats, birds, when they died off by accident or of old age; she simply dug a little ditch in the corner of the garden, threw them in, kicked the dirt over them, and calmly found a new subject to fill the place of the departed one.

Her few acquaintances in town were among the

families of clerks employed in Paris during the day. Occasionally these people invited her to drink tea with them. She invariably fell asleep at all these festivities, and had to be aroused when the time came to go home. No one was ever allowed to accompany her by day or night. She never appeared to care for children.

She spent her time like a man—carpentering, gardening, cutting wood with a saw or axe, keeping the old house in repair, even doing a mason's work when necessary.

She had two sisters, Mme. Cimme and Mme. Colombel, the one having married a dealer in medical herbs, the other a man of small independent means. These people came to see her twice a year. The Cimmes had no children. The Colombels were blessed with three,—Henri, Pauline, Joseph. Henri aged twenty, Pauline seventeen, and the little Joseph, only three, having arrived on the scene when all thought of such an event was at an end.

No affection seemed to exist between the old maid and her relatives.

In the spring of 1882 Queen Hortense fell suddenly ill. The neighbors called in the doctor. She promptly ordered him about his business. The priest also put in an appearance. She jumped, half naked, out of her bed, and chased him from the house.

The poor little maid, in despair, made tisane for her.

After three days in bed, her condition became so grave that the cooper next door had a consultation with the doctor, and thereupon took the responsibility of sending for her family.

The two sisters, with their respective spouses, arrived by the same train, about ten o'clock in the morning. The Colombels brought little Joseph with them.

At the garden gate, the first thing they saw was the little maid, leaning disconsolately against the side of the house, and weeping bitterly.

The dog lay asleep in the sun. Two cats lay stretched at full length on either window sill, their eyes shut, their tails extended. A big hen, surrounded by a brood

of little chicks, clucking noisily, strutted about the yard. A big cage hung against the wall, covered over with chickweed, and in it a number of birds were singing themselves hoarse in the joyous brightness of the spring morning.

Two love-birds in another cage, in the form of a chalet, sat tranquilly, side by side, on the perch.

M. Cimme, an aggressive, stout man, who always took the lead, pushing every one from his path, men as well as women, when necessary, asked, "Well, Celeste, things going badly?" The little maid sobbed through her tears:

"She doesn't know me any more. The doctor says the end has come."

They all looked at each other. Mme. Cimme and Mme. Colombel silently embraced. They were very much alike, these two women, always arranging their hair in flat bandeaus, and wearing red shawls and French cashmeres of an amazing hue.

Cimme turned to his brother-in-law, a little, pale, jaundiced-looking man, evidently suffering from some chronic stomach trouble, and who also, added to his other misfortunes, limped painfully, and said seriously:

"*Bigre!* it was time."

But no one as yet dared to enter the chamber of the dying woman, which was on the ground floor. Even Cimme, always so consequential, ceded, for the time, the right of way. It was Colombel who finally decided to enter first, forging along with the see-sawing motion caused by his lameness, and making the pavement ring with the iron ferule of his cane. The two women next ventured, and Cimme brought up the rear. The little Joseph remained outside, beguiled by the sight of the dog.

A ray of sunlight lay across the bed, lighting up sharply the hand which twitched nervously, opening and shutting ceaselessly. The fingers moved as if animated by some fixed idea. The angular form lay rigid under the sheet. The eyes were closed.

The relatives formed a half-circle around the bed,

watching, without speaking, the heaving breast and labored breathing. The little maid followed them, still weeping. At last Cimme asked, "Tell me exactly what the doctor said."

The girl sobbed.

"To leave her alone. Nothing can be done.

All at once the old maid's lips began to move; she seemed to be saying to herself thoughts hidden in the dying brain, and her hands moved strangely.

Suddenly she spoke in a little thin voice scarcely recognizable, in a voice that seemed to come from afar, from the depths of this lonely creature's heart, possibly.

Cimme walked off on tiptoes, pained at the spectacle. Colombel, whose crippled leg fatigued him, sat down.

The two women remained standing.

Queen Hortense continued to babble rapid, unintelligible words. She uttered many strange names, calling to them softly and tenderly, "Come here, my little Phillipe, kiss mamma. You love your mother? Tell me, child. You, Rose, must watch over the little sister while I am out. Be sure and not leave her alone, you understand? And I forbid you to touch the matches."

She was silent a moment, then, louder, as if some one was calling, "Henriette!" She waited a moment, and then continued, "Tell your father to come and speak to me before he goes to the office." Then suddenly, "I am suffering a little this morning, dear; promise to come home early. Tell your chief that I am ill. You know it is dangerous to leave the children alone when I am in bed. I shall make a nice dish of sweetened rice for your dinner; the little ones love it. Wont Clara be glad?"

She laughed—such a laugh! with a young and brilliant ring in it.

"Look at Jean, how absurd he is! all daubed over with preserves, the dirty little fellow! Look, dear, isn't he funny?"

Colombel, who fidgeted his lame leg, made stiff by the journey, muttered, "She dreams she has children and a husband. The death struggle begins."

The sisters, dumb and stupid with surprise, never stirred. The little maid finally said, "Wont you take off your bonnets and shawls, and come into this room?"

They passed out without saying a word, and Colombel followed limping, leaving the dying woman in solitude. Having laid aside their wraps, the women seated themselves. One of the cats left her seat on the window, stretched herself, hunched her back, and jumped into the room and upon the lap of Mme. Cimme, who began to caress her.

From the next room came the voice of the dying woman, living over, without doubt, in those last moments the life she had long imagined and desired; rehearsing for the last time all her longings and dreams.

Cimme, in the garden, played with little Joseph and the dog, with all the pleasure of a man out for a holiday, forgetful of the departing soul.

Suddenly he entered and spoke to the maid:

"My girl, get us some breakfast. What would you like, ladies?"

They decided on an *omelette aux fines herbes*, tenderloin with new potatoes, cheese, and a cup of coffee; and as Mme. Colombel made a motion of searching for her pocket-book, Cimme stopped her, and turning to the girl, said, "You must have some money."

She replied, "Yes, sir."

"How much?"

"Fifteen francs."

"That is enough. Hurry, my girl, I begin to feel hungry."

Mme. Cimme, looking out longingly at the vines bathed in sunlight, and at two pigeons coquetting on the roof opposite, remarked in a dismal way,

"Such a pity to be here under the circumstances. It would be lovely in the country to-day."

Her sister sighed, without answering, and Colombel, possibly dreading the suggestion of a walk, muttered:

"My leg hurts me awfully."

Little Joseph and the dog made a terrible noise shrieking in the excitement of play, the dog barking

furiously; they tore around the little garden, chasing each other wildly.

The dying woman ceaselessly called on her children, talking to each in turn, going through the form of dressing them, caressing them, and even teaching them to read.

"Come now, Simon, repeat A, B, C, D. You don't try, dear. Listen, D, D, D. Do you hear? Try again."

Cimme remarked, "What extraordinary ideas people have at such moments!"

Madame Colombel asked, "Would it not be better to go and sit by her?" But Mme. Cimme dissuaded her.

"What is the use, since you can't do her any good? We are of quite as much use here."

They all quietly acquiesced. Mme. Cimme contemplated the love-birds, said to be inseparable; she moralized in a few words on their constancy, admired their fidelity, and wondered why men did not imitate their virtue. Cimme laughed knowingly, and sang, "Tra la, la, tra, la, la, la!" in a swaggering way that suggested much to the imagination of his listeners concerning Cimme himself.

Colombel fidgeted, and banged his cane on the brick floor.

The other cat entered, tail in air.

One o'clock struck before they sat down to breakfast.

No sooner they had tasted the wine when Colombel, who had been ordered to drink Burgundy, and only of the choicest vintage, called the servant.

"My girl, is there nothing better than this in the cellar?"

"Yes, sir, there is the wine that has always been served to you when you were here before."

"Well, bring us three bottles."

They seemed to enjoy the wine; not that it was anything very fine, but it had been fifteen years in the cellar. Cimme, smacking his lips, pronounced it "good wine for an invalid." Colombel, possessed with a strong desire to have the wine for his own use, asked of the maid, "How much of it is still in the cellar?"

"Oh, nearly all, sir. Mam'selle never drank any of it."

He then turned to his brother-in-law. "If you will, Cimme, I would like to make an exchange with you for this wine. It suits me admirably."

The hen in her turn wandered into the room, followed by her downy brood. The women amused themselves by throwing crumbs at the little chickens.

Joseph and the dog, having satisfied their hunger, went back to the garden.

Queen Hortense continued talking, but now in a lower voice; the words were barely audible.

When finished with their coffee, they all returned to the sick room to ascertain the condition of the patient. She appeared to be calm.

They left her alone again, and sat in the garden, to better digest a good breakfast.

All at once the dog tore about the chairs, rushing in and out holding something in his mouth. The child chased wildly after him. Both disappeared in the house.

Cimme fell asleep in the sunlight.

The dying woman began to talk aloud. All at once she cried out.

The two women and Colombel hurried in. Cimme wakened, but did not stir; he disliked such scenes.

She was sitting up in bed, a wild look in her eyes. The dog, to escape pursuit, had leaped up on the bed, jumped over the poor thing, and intrenched himself behind the pillows. He looked at his little comrade with shining eyes, ready to begin the fray again. He held in his mouth one of his mistress's slippers, all in rags from the rough play.

The child, frightened by the woman who had so suddenly confronted him, stood still, gazing at the bed.

The hen, startled by the noise, ran in, flew on a chair, clucking to her little ones, who were piping, terrified, beneath it.

Queen Hortense cried with a piercing voice,

"No, no, I will not die. I will not. I will not. Who will bring up my children? Who will take care

of them? Who love them? No, no, I cannot, I can not. I——"

She fell back. All was over.

The dog, still full of excitement, jumped to the floor, bounding about.

Colombel ran to the window, and called his brother-in-law. "Come quickly! Come quickly! She has passed away!"

Then Cimme arose, and resuming his usual importance, stalked into the death chamber saying,

"It has been shorter than I could have believed."

The story of the young hero who saved Holland from the sea is not more interesting than the following native sketch by "Patience Oriel," which is republished from the Philadelphia *Times*.

HOW PETE SAVED THE LEVEE.

For days the river had been rising. The levees above were gone for miles and miles, and the mad waters had swept over the banks, carrying fortunes and even lives before them.

On one of the big plantations opposite Shreveport, every effort was being made to withstand the flood. Hands were collected from every cabin, and recruited from all the adjoining places, to strengthen the water-soaked levees, which shook on the pressure of a man's foot.

It was almost dusk, but the men, who had not rested for days, worked up with the strength of fresh vigor, as the voice of Tom Aiken, the planter, directed them, and cheered them on to the task which seemed so hopeless as the water crept steadily and steadily higher. But for the fact that every one was busy with his work, a little negro boy, who suddenly dropped his spade and stole away betwixt the wheels of the big sand wagon, might have been seen, as he scurried away around the curve on the embankment.

He ran quickly along for a full quarter of a mile, without looking back, down the narrow, slippery road that was left between the cotton rows and the levee. The boy slackened his pace when he became convinced that no one was in pursuit of him, and, as he did so, he heard the loud, cheery voice of Tom Aiken, back at the break: "All work together, boys!"

"Huh! All work togedder," the boy said, "Yes sir, but you bet dis here nigger done tired er workin' togedder. Ise gwine to sleep, I is; I an' shet my eyes for two whole days an' nights, an' I gwine round the p'int to Aun' Viny's an' go to sleep."

In his eagerness to reach the coveted goal, the little negro quickened his pace again. It was now almost dark, but his eyes had grown accustomed to the gloom. He could see the curving line of the levee, which seemed to tremble with a premonition of its own inadequacy; he could see all the water-pools in the road. His little legs had measured perhaps a mile more, when the ominous roar of the river made him stop and peer over the levee at the rushing waters.

As he scrambled up the slippery bank, a clod of loosened earth fell heavily into the road below, and through the orifice which it left a little stream of muddy water trickled. The boy caught his breath quickly when the water ran over his head.

"Lordy!" he exclaimed. "Dere's gwine to be a break right here. Lordy! Lordy! what I gwine to do!"

He stopped to reconsider. There was still another mile before he could reach the point; and he knew there were only a few old women in the cabins there, and he could get no help from that source. It was more than a mile back to where the men were working, and he was afraid to show himself there after having run away. Besides there was not a moment to lose. What was to be done? The boy knew that a great responsibility rested upon him. If the little opening were not stopped immediately it was only a question of a few moments before the levee would be swept away.

He stood up and looked about him. There was no one in sight. He thought he might find a bag of sand dropped by a passing wagon, but there was none. With a sudden purpose he turned and sat down over the little crevice through which the water came; the soft earth yielded to his weight, and with his hands and feet he pressed it about him, patting it to make it firm.

The difficulty had been solved without his volition, almost. It was only after it was done that he thought of the consequence. He calculated, in his unreasoning way, that it was eight o'clock. How long would he have to remain there? For aught he knew till morn-

ing. He began to suffer, by and by, from his cramped position, but he dared not move, even the least bit, lest the crevice would open again.

He began to get drowsy; his limbs were almost numb. He wondered what would become of him if he should go to sleep. If the waters should rise up over the levee and drown him, and ruin the cotton, would it make any difference then that he had tried to save it? He was inadequate to the problem, the like of which has puzzled graver heads than his. The hooting of the owl grew less and less frequent, the swishing of the waters fainter and fainter, and the pain in his back easier.

He must have slept some time. Suddenly he was awakened by the gallop of a horse on the road below. He was too weak to move. His voice was almost gone, but as the horse and rider approached, he cried out with all the strength he could summon: "Marse Tom!"

Mr. Aiken drew rein quickly and turned his big lantern in the direction of the voice.

"Who is it, and where are you?" he asked, dismounting.

"It's me, boss," answered the boy.

"What the mischief are you doing here, Pete?" inquired Aiken, peering into the boy's begrimed face. "Why, you are almost buried alive!"

"I runned away from back yonder," the boy answered. "I seed the levee er breakin' here, so I stopped."

"Why, bless the boy," said Aiken, "you must be nearly dead. What is to be done? Can you stand it till I ride back and get help to fill the break? It will open as soon as you move."

"Yessir; but hurry, boss," answered the boy.

As Aiken turned to remount he heard the sound of the boat-wheels around the curve, and the whistle sounded out hoarsely.

"By George!" exclaimed Aiken, "there's a boat, and three more inches of water will top the levee here, and then all is lost."

In a few moments the boat rounded the curve, and the big lights shone out across the water.

"The *Marsden*," Aiken said, as he saw the two smokestacks, "with Morton at the wheel; I shall have to fight for it."

So saying, he picked up his gun from where he had dropped it when he dismounted, and strode on up stream to meet the boat.

"Steer for the other side!" he called out when the boat was in hailing distance.

"I'm running this machine," responded the coarse voice of Morton, "and I guess the river is free."

Aiken could see the little tongues of water as they overlapped the banks above. If the boat did not turn, she would send the water over the levee, lower down where the boy was, and he and the whole embankment would be sucked in. There was no time to be lost.

Swinging the lantern above his head, so that Morton might see him, he flung his rifle to his shoulder, and called back: "Come another foot nearer to this shore and you are a dead man."

Morton knew what manner of man he had to deal with. The wheel reversed, the boat tacked and grazed the opposite shore, which was already submerged.

"All right now, Pete," said Aiken, gently patting the boy's muddy pate. "I'll go on and be back in a few moments."

When they came, by and by, and put sand bags in the hole Pete had been covering, the little fellow was too weak to speak or to stand, and Mr. Aiken took him up in his arms, and himself carried him to the house.

And now Pete does nothing but ride on the back seat of the carriage to open the gates for the driver, or to carry parcels when Tom Aiken's pretty wife goes to Shreveport shopping; for his "boss" is grateful to the little hero who saved the plantation.

ROMANCE

BEING

The Tales of the New York Story Club

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This story of Christmas cheer is a genuine reminiscence of a time now happily past, by Nina Fitch.

A CONFEDERATE CHRISTMAS.

It was quite the most expensive dinner I have ever eaten. Altogether, it cost us exactly five hundred dollars—Confederate money, 'tis true, and fast becoming worthless—many regrets and not a few tears.

The last year of the war had come, and as fast as the value of our money went down the price of things went up. A single pound of coffee meant twenty-five dollars; a beefsteak fifteen, a turkey fifty, and a barrel of flour two hundred; to say nothing of such small things as needles and pins coming to over five dollars a paper; so, with these prices as a gauge, it is quite easy to imagine how the cost of a simple little Christmas merry-making could mount up into the hundreds. The rawest of damp winters was upon us, and we, a shivering little family of Charleston refugees, were penniless and alone in a strange city. Some months before my father had written from Morris Island, "The Confederacy is on its last legs and Charleston will probably be burned." We were ordered straightway to Columbia. Thither, two days later, my mother fled, accompanied only by her little brood of three, one faithful servant and her four-year-old child; and there, for near a winter of sad weeks, we led a doubtful and hand-to-mouth existence.

To begin with, it seemed to our homesick hearts that these inland people were made of a different clay from us coast-bred folk. Food was scarce and times grew harder every day. First, the small sum of money my mother had scraped together before leaving Charleston was spent. Then, piece by piece, our small stock of silver was dug up out of the cellar, where, in anticipation of "Yankees," it had been religiously buried,

sold, and the proceeds eaten up. At last came the saddest period of all—when a goodly stock of antiquated finery was turned into food; when a velvet cloak meant so many bits of beef and quarts of rice, and a silk dress just such a number of big wood fires; when we existed entirely off the remains of a once-splendid European trousseau that had served my mother some ten years before. These things were bought by our well-to-do neighbors, fashion-loving ladies that the continued war and interrupted transportation had reduced to calico frocks and venerable headgear; and right cleverly did they remodel those ancient garments to suit the hideous styles of the day. I remember one particular sky-blue silk dress that had a specially brilliant career.

It made its first appearance at a military ball, disporting its charms on the back of our doctor's wife; in her turn, Mrs. Doctor sold it to a milliner. This lady, who must truly have been a great artist and inspired in the bargain, resolved it into bonnets, the dearth of which was just at that moment setting all feminine Columbia mad. Fashioned the same shape, of an equal size, and all trimmed with the same rosettes of the blonde lace that had once ornamented the dress, these freaks of war-time ingenuity were looked upon as marvels of loveliness and sold like hot cakes, the frequent sight of them in the streets causing us more than one bitter pang. But, alas, there came a day when everything was gone—not so much as a rag of millinery or a salt spoon left to sell. No, not quite everything, for in a dingy old trunk in my mother's closet a priceless treasure lay — a wonderful thing with a fabulous train, a point-lace gimp and huge angel sleeves, smelling much of lavender and a little of must, and all ticketed and labelled: "For Kit on her wedding day." And I, Miss Catherine Calhoun Prescott (alias "Kit" and aged nine), felt vastly important at the sight of that label.

Another emotion stirred my being when I touched those fast-discoloring folds of satin—one of reverence, that at the sight of a knot of dead orange blossoms turned into awe; for, it seemed to me, it was indeed a

holy relic, something to be put aside and worshipped in our family for generations to come. But that bitter Christmas Eve of '64 there was no thought of this treasure in my mind. My little brain was busy with more prosaic things, and first and foremost in my reveries came the recollection of a once-confiding but now stony-hearted green grocer who had shut down on us with an iron hand. True, we still had a decent roof over our heads and enough hickory logs to keep us warm, but these were not eatable things, and our larder was as empty as the old lady's in the nursery rhyme. There was not a scrap of credit to be had. Those wise butchers and bakers had learned a thing or two. They were not for trusting hungry refugees for the balance of their days! Oh, no, not they! So thus it was that on that ever-memorable night the outlook for the morrow's dinner was black indeed. Our case was one that required desperate measures, and as soon as she saw us safely in bed, for at least the twentieth time that day my mother summoned our servant Bina [christened Sabina, and a supposed slave, but in reality our sovereign mistress and governor] to a council of war. It was a long interview that came to our ears in tearful murmurings, causing my two little brothers to stir nervously in their trundle bed at the side of my four-poster.

Tom, the elder, aged eight, and a famous glutton, listened to it awhile, then proposed a brilliant scheme for our next day's dinner. He thought it might keep ma from crying. She wouldn't look so pale then and whisper so much to Bina. "If," he went on, "folks would only 'low it, we might stuff Pete (poor Bina's pickaninny, then in skirts and with no ambition beyond ham-bag trousers and enough to eat) an' put a apple in his mouth an' bake him like a 'possum. He's fat like one—or a pig—or—"

He could get no further. Forthwith I fell upon him, tooth and nail, with a long and proper sermon on cannibalism and greedy children in particular, ending up with the half-melancholy conclusion that no matter

what happened we could not possibly eat Pete. Before it was finished, Tom had sunk to a peaceful slumber, and, with a sleepy prayer that "sisser" would call him when "Santy Tlaus tummed," Jack, too, turned over and was soon wandering in a land of dreams. For a long time I lay there, my eyes stretched to their widest limit, looking idly through an uncurtained window to where the bright moonlight fell upon the naked branches of a huge tree, to outline them afterward in delicate tracery on the snow beneath.

Jack had said that when Santa Claus came it would be from that direction. Just a tinkling of sleigh bells and a prancing of deer hoofs and old St. Nick would dash past that window, to drop, a moment later, down the chimney.

"St. Nick, indeed!" thought I. "There's no Christmas for us, little Jack," and, with a great tightening at my throat, I blinked my eyes fiercely and tried hard not to cry.

"Kit, darling, are you awake?" I heard my mother say suddenly, and I looked up to find her standing beside my bed, all cloaked and bonneted for an outing. Then kneeling beside me she continued, in a low voice, so as not to wake the boys: "I've got five hundred dollars, Kit; think of it!—five hundred whole dollars! Enough to get to-morrow's dinner and some toys for the boys, and other things besides."

And she snuggled my hand in hers and smiled down into my amazed face, yet with a wistful look in her eyes that belied the cheerfulness of her manner; and somehow those sad eyes seemed to plead with me to ask no questions. I did not. We only held each other's hands the tighter, and exchanged one long and understanding kiss! She next explained to me that in order to have our Christmas dinner it would be necessary to go to market that night; the stores would all be closed next day. Bina must go, too. Would I be afraid to stay with the children while they were away? They wouldn't be long—scarcely an hour.

"Afraid! Not I," was my proud answer. For when,

as she generally did, my mother treated me as a woman grown, I tried hard to live up to the honor. However, this night my willingness to comply with her request came from no special pride or bravery on my part. I seemed to be in somewhat of a dazed and non-comprehending state. After a month or more of unusually short commons, during which time the realities of our forlorn condition had been painfully stamped on my young mind, the genuineness of this phantom five-hundred-dollar bill was something too shadowy to be grasped. Corn pone, bacon, and greens we had long been glad enough to get, with just an occasional treat of sorghum molasses to keep us from forgetting the taste; and why, now, should we be thus suddenly flung into the arms of a turkey? (I suppose I should have said wings.)

"And fruit-cake, too," thought I, quoting my mother.

No, no, Kit Prescott, you've imagined this! You've just been lying here with your eyes wide open, fancying all manner of ridiculous things. That was only a dream-mother standing at the bedside of her little dream-girl, and she was not your mother, and you are not her little girl, and you will get no turkey to-morrow! And with this sorrowful reflection I fell fast asleep.

The next morning, with the twittering of the snow-birds outside my window, came the refrain of a familiar melody:

> "Jeff Davis rides a white horse
> And Lincoln rides a mule,"

and from the resounding box and shrill yell that followed I knew exactly what had happened. Bina wasn't going to stand any such nonsense. She was not responsible for our manners and morals, but Pete must be trained in the way he should go. "Course I'll allers be er fas' fren' ob de fambly's, no mattah how de wah en's," she would say, "but I isn't gwine ter stan' no nigger chile ob mine castin' 'spersions on Marse Linkum's cac'ter."

Poor Bina! She died soon after of the measles, and

is in heaven now, I hope—though she *was* light-fingered at times.

But to return to my Christmas and—the dinner. Never did I have a better one. Never was there such a bursting breast to another turkey; such grainy rice, or such huge and mealy yams, all wrapped in wet newspapers and baked in the red-hot ashes. Then with all these good things, *such* draughts of persimmon beer, light and sparkling as champagne, pouring out with a gurgle and drunk with reeling senses! At the very last, after the dessert of fruit-cake and hickory nuts, came a tiny nip of good old rye, just to help digestion along, and toast—but I am anticipating. At three o'clock sharp the feast was announced, and exactly one minute past, with a dramatic opening, it began. First, Pete flung the pine door back; then, with a great flourish of black elbows, Bina appeared, bearing our turkey aloft as they did the boar's head of old, her own bound up in a marvellous bandanna turban, and with a stiffly starched purple calico accentuating her broad hips with a balloon-like grace.

She had hardly set down our mammoth bird and begun to wrestle with it than Pete gave a frightened howl. It was echoed by one from his mother.

With her eyes rolling wildly, she glared past where I sat to the window behind me, crying aloud: "It's a sperrit! A sperrit!" Then, with a tremulous "Tom!" my mother rushed from the room, and I, too, turned to be electrified. For there, with its haggard face pressed to the window pane, was a skeleton mule, and on its back the wraith of a man—our father! It was not long before we had him in that warm room, asking a thousand questions and thumping him all over to see if he was really alive and whole.

"Wounded!" he cried, flinging his cap down and catching us all in his arms at once. "Nary a scratch: Just a little blood spittin' that follered a cole," he declared. (And I quote him literally, truth thus compelling me to admit that, though we proud Southrons had many high-flown notions, we were not any too

choice with our English.) The doctor of his damp fort had sent him home to get well, but, alas, though he little thought it then, to die.

Ah, what a happy dinner that was! Such pleasure to see that weary soldier stretch his long limbs to our fire's cheerful blaze, to hear him vow that he had never had so nice a meal or felt so "good" in all his life before! What brilliant jokes, too, we made that day! And what rollicking toasts with our beady persimmon beer!

Only, at the last, came a sad moment when, with a pitiful working of her face, my mother acknowledged the price she had paid for this famous dinner. It had been dearly bought, for our treasure was gone to return no more.

"Of course, it was an orful pity to sell it," said my father, after we had bitterly bewailed the sacrilege that our poverty had led to, "but, as you say, Catherine, the children had to have a dinner. And you sorter thought pa was comin', eh? Well, well, I suppose it couldn't be helped."

Then, springing to his feet and taking his favorite Napoleonic attitude, one thin hand thrust in the breast of his shabby gray coat—once so tight, now *so* loose over that hollow chest!—he announced that he had one more toast to propose; but he wouldn't drink this one in weak beer; genuine old "pop-skull" this time.

"What is it, pa?" I asked eagerly, as I handed him up the requested "few drops." "Jeff Davis—the Confederacy?"

"Not by a long shot! No, Kit, my girl; the sweet thing that gave us our Christmas dinner—ma's weddin' frock."

To this story the reader must bring his own interpretation of the strange and curious facts that the writer, J. M. Barrie, has collected.

THE FAMILY HONOR.

MUCH of the story of the Glendowie Monster, now on the tongues of all in the north who are not afraid to speak, has been born of ugly fancies since the night of September 4, 1890, when that happened which sent the country to bed with long candles for the rest of the month. I was at Glendowie Castle that night, and I heard the scream that made nigh two hundred people suddenly stand still in the dance; but of what is now being said I take no stock, thinking it damning to a noble house; and of what was said before that night I will repeat only the native gossip and the story of the children, which I take to be human rather than the worst horror of all, as some would have it.

There are those in Glendowie who hold that this Thing has been in the castle, and there held down by chains, since the year 1200, when the wild Lady Mildred gave it birth and died of sight of it; and, in the daylight (but never before wine), they will speak the name of her lover, and so account for 1200 A. D. being known in the annals of that house, not as a year of our Lord but as the year of the Devil. I am not sufficiently old-fashioned for such a story, and rather believe that the Thing was never in the castle until the coming home from Africa of him who was known as the Left-Handed Earl, which happened a matter of seventy years ago. The secret manner of his coming and the oddness of his attendants, with a wild story of his clearing the house of all other servnts for fifteen days, during which he was not idle, raised a crop of scandal that has not yet been cut level with the earth. To be plain, it is said by those who believe witchcraft to be done with, that the Left-Handed Earl brought the Thing from Africa, and in fifteen days had a home made for it in the cas-

tle—a home that none could find the way to save himself and a black servant, who frequently disappeared for many days at a time, yet was known always to be within whistle of his master. Men said furtively that this Thing was the heir, and again there was the Devil's shadow in the story, as if the Devil could be a woman.

Half a century ago the Left-Handed Earl died, and they will tell you of a three-days' search for a minister brave enough to pray by the open coffin, and that, in the middle of the prayer, the mourners rose to their feet and ran out of the room, because of something squatting on the corpse's chest. There are many such stories of the Thing, against which all who might have seen shut their eyes so quickly that no two drew the same likeness. But this is no great matter, for what they say they saw I will not tell, and I would that none had ever told me.

There have been four earls since then; but, if the tale of the Thing be true, not one of them lawful earls. Yet until the 4th of September, 1890, since the time of the Left-Handed Earl, it has always been the same black servant who waited on the Thing, so that many marvelled and called these two one, as they were not. Of the earls I have nothing to tell that could not be told by other men, save this, that they paced their halls by night, and have ever had an air of listening, not to what was being said to them but as if for some sudden cry from beyond.

It is not a pretty story, except what is told of the monster's love of children; and though, until the 4th of September, 1890, I never believed what was told of the Thing and these children, I believe it now. What they say is, that it was so savage that not even the black servant could have gone within reach of it and lived; yet with children scarce strong enough to walk, save on all-fours, it would play for hours even as they played, but with a mother's care for them. There are men of all ages in these parts who hold that they were with it in their childhood and loved it, though now they shudder at a picture they recall, I think, but vaguely. And

some of them, doubtless, are liars. It may be wondered why the lords of Glendowie dared let a child into the power of one that would have broken themselves across its knee; and two reasons are given: the first, that it knew when there were children in the castle, and would have broken down walls to reach them had they not been brought to it; the other, that compassion induced the earls to give it the only pleasure it knew. Of these children some were of the tenantry and others of guests in the castle, and I have not heard of one who dreaded the monster. If half of the stories be true, they would let it toss them sportively in the air, and they would sit with their arms around its neck while it made toys for them of splinters of wood or music by rattling its chains. I need not say that care was taken to keep these meetings from the parents of the children, in which conspiracy the children unconsciously joined, for the pleasant prattle of their new friends allayed suspicion rather than roused it. Nevertheless, queer rumors arose in recent times which, I dare say, few believed who came from a distance; yet were they sufficiently disquieting to make guests leave their children at home, and, as I understand, on the 4th of September, 1890, several years had passed since a child had slept in the castle. On that night there were many guests and one child, who had been in bed for some hours when the Thing broke loose.

. . . . . .

The occasion was the coming of age of the heir, and seldom, I suppose, has there been such a company in a house renowned for hospitality. There were many persons from distant parts, which means London, and all the great folk of our country, with others not so great, in that gathering, though capable of making a show at most. After the dancing begins, no man is ever a prominent figure in a room to those who are there merely to look on, as I was; and I now remember, as the two which my eyes followed with greatest pleasure, our hostess, a woman of winning manners, yet cold when need be, and the lady who was shortly to become her daughter, a languid girl, pretty to look at when her

lover, the heir, was by her side. I know that nearly all present that night speak now of a haggard look on the earl's face, and of quick glances between him and his wife; I know they say that the heir danced much to keep himself from thinking, and that his arm chattered on the waists of his partners; I know the story that he had learned of the existence of the Thing that night. But I was present, and I am persuaded that at the time all thought, as I did, that never was a gayer scene even at Glendowie, never a host and hostess more cordial, never a merry-eyed heir more anxious to be courteous to all and more than courteous to one. Dance succeeded dance. The hour was late, but another waltz was begun. Then suddenly—

And at once the music stopped and the dancers were as still as stone figures. It had been a horrible, inhuman scream, so loud and shrill as to tear a way through all the walls of the castle; a scream not of pain, but of triumph. I think it must have lasted half a minute, and then came silence, but still no one moved; we waited as if after lightning for the thunder.

The first person I saw was the earl. His face was not white, but gray. His teeth were fixed and he was staring at the door, waiting for it to open. Some men hastened to the door, and he cast out his arms and drove them back. But he never looked at them. The heir I saw with his hands over his face. Many of the men stepped in front of the women. There was no whispering, I think. We all turned our eyes to the door.

Some ladies screamed (one, I have heard, swooned; but we gave her not a glance) when the door opened. It was only the African servant who entered, a man most of us had heard of but few had seen. He made a sign to the earl, who drew back from him and then stepped forward. The heir hurried to the door, and some of us heard this conversation:

"Not you, father; me."

"Stay here, my son; I entreat, I command."

"Both," said the servant authoritatively; and then they went out with him and the door closed.

The dancing was resumed almost immediately. This is a strange thing to tell. Only a woman could have forced us to seem once more as we were before that horrid cry; and the woman was our hostess. As the door closed, my eyes met hers, and I saw that she had been speaking to the musicians. She was smiling graciously, as if what had occurred had been but an amusing interlude. I saw her take her place beside her partner, and begin the waltz again with the music. All looked at her with amazement, dread, pity, suspicion, but they had to dance. "Does she know nothing?" I asked myself, overhearing her laughing merrily as she was whirled past me. Or was this the woman's part in the tragedy while the men were doing theirs? What were they doing? It was whispered in the ball-room that they were in the open, looking for something that had escaped from the castle.

An hour, I dare say, passed, and neither the earl nor his son had returned. The dancing went on, but it had become an uncanny scene: every one trying to read the other's face, the men uncomfortable, as if feeling that they should be elsewhere, many of the women craven, only the countess in high spirits. By this time it was known to all of us that the door of the ball-room was locked on the outside. Guests bade our hostess good-night, but could retire no further. One man dared request her to bid the servants unlook the door, and she smiled and asked him for the next waltz.

About two o'clock in the morning, many of us heard a child's scream, that came, as we thought, from the hall of the castle.

A moment afterward we again heard it—this time from the shrubbery. I saw the countess shake with fear at last, but it was only for a moment. Already she was beckoning to the musicians to continue playing. One of the guests stopped them by raising his hand; he was the child's father.

"You must bid your servants unbar that door," he said to the countess sternly, "or I will force it open."

"You cannot leave this room, sir," she answered

quite composedly; and then he broke out passionately, fear for his child mastering him. Something about devil's work, he said.

"There is some one on the other side of that door who would not hesitate to kill you," she replied; and we knew that she spoke of the native servant.

"Order him to open the door."

"I will not."

In another moment the door would have been broken open had she not put her back against it. Her eyes were now flashing. The men looked at each other in doubt, and each of them, I know, were for tearing her from the door. It was then that we heard the report of a gun.

It is my belief that the countess saved the life of her guest by preventing his leaving the ball-room. For close on another hour she stood at the door, and the servants gathered round her like men ready to support their mistress.

We were now in groups, whispering and listening, and I shall tell what I heard, believing it to be all that was heard by any of us, though some of those present that night now tell stranger tales. I heard a child laughing, and I doubt not that we were meant to hear it, to appease the parents' fear; I heard the tramp of men in the hall and on the stairs, and afterward an unpleasant dirge from above. A carriage drove up the walk and stopped at the door. Then came heavy noises on the stair, as of some weight being slowly moved down it. By and by the carriage drove off. The earl returned to the ball-room, but no one was allowed to leave it until daybreak. I lost sight of the countess when the earl came in, but many say that he whispered something to her, to which she replied, "Thank God!" and then fainted. No explanation of this odd affair was given to the company; but it is believed that the Thing, whatever it was, was shot that night and taken away by the heir and the servant to Africa, there to be buried.

This story is published early in the month in order that it may be read before the Christmas shopping is begun. After reading it no further words are necessary except to state that it is from the German of Franz Reuter.

WHAT CAME OF A SURPRISE.

As Christmas time approached there was always a pleasant stir in our house, much mysterious running about, and secret working and thrusting of things into corners, and many whispered consultations.

There was one room into which we children never ventured, where our mother sat with a couple of seamstresses, making new dresses for the girls and new clothes for us boys against Christmas; for in those days the jackets and trousers for the boys were made in the family, instead of at the tailor's. Now and then, one of us would be called, and with our eyes bandaged, and mittens on our hands, led into the forbidden room for the trying on. The mittens were a suggestion of my grandmother's, as the year previous my eldest sister Lizette had felt about with her hands, to discover what sort of cloth her new dress was made of.

"Do look at the child," said grandmother. "How clever she is! wait a minute, we will remedy that;" and from that time no child was allowed to enter the room without mittens.

But if the old people had their secrets, we children had our secrets too. Before Christmas our earthen saving boxes were broken open, and what we had saved up through the year was taken out to buy presents. My father always got from each of us a lead-pencil and a stick of sealing-wax; for we knew if we gave them to him at Christmas, we should get them again on New Year's. Later my sisters used to present him with a pair of embroidered slippers, which he never wore, for after his death we found seven pairs in his closet.

Then we got a new comb for Aunt Schäning and a new warm hood for grandmother. But the greater portion of our money would be left for mother, and here began

our secrecy. For the other gifts were old-established customs, which we never changed. When I had made up my mind and had purchased some fine thing of Meier the Jew, on the express condition of changing it if it did not suit, for we were carefully trained in that respect, I would go in my delight straight to mother and say:

"Mother, I am going to give you something for Yule-rap."

Then she would say, "Ah, don't tell any one what it is."

"No," I would say, "I will tell nobody; only I will tell you it is so and so."

As I grew older I learned to keep silence, and when I came home from the high-school for the Christmas holidays for the first time I was so secret about my present that not even my uncle Matthias could find it out. He came up to me when I was doing it up, using more paper, cord, and sealing-wax, than it was all worth.

"What have you there?"

"Nothing much."

"Nothing much? But I see that you have something much."

"But you ought not to see it," I said.

"Is that a proper answer to your uncle?" and I got a sharp box on the ear.

Now for some time I had not been used to that sort of thing, for I was a Tertian, or third-form boy, and I asked him if he was aware that I was a Tertian.

"More's the pity," said he. "I know you are a very foolish boy, but if you were the head of the whole school, our relations are not altered."

Well, I was angry and indignant; for a boy of fifteen has a lively sense of his own importance; but it was not pleasant to quarrel with him in earnest; so I soon cooled down.

"Well," he asked again quietly, "what have you got?"

"Uncle," said I, "I don't like to tell. I want to surprise my mother, and give her an unexpected pleasure."

"So, you want to surprise her! well, let me tell you then; I have been surprised several times in my life,

and I would give all the surprises for a good pipe of tobacco. And as for the unexpected pleasures, my son, that other people prepare for us, they are too often only annoyances and vexations. What a sad time I had with Aunt Schäning! I knew that she had no snuff-box, and always helped herself out of the horn; so at the fair last summer I thought I would give her an unexpected pleasure, and bought her a fine snuff-box. What did she do? she threw it at my head and called me an impertinent fellow. And then, my son, what pleasant surprises those were, when we had the lottery for the poor and I drew a spinning-wheel, your mother a fine smoking-cap with a gilt tassel, Frau Boetz a pair of leather breeches, and Herr Pastor a little hand-organ."

"Yes, uncle," said I, "but Christmas is a very different thing, and no vexation can come of this."

"Don't be too sure of that," said he. "You have had the moral beforehand. Now I will tell you the story.

"Some years ago, when I was living in Parschen, the Herr Rathsherr Zarnekow was still living in Güstrow with his wife, daughter, and sister-in-law. The three women folk used to go out driving every day in a little carriage with a seat behind. In front on the little box, which was movable, sat the coachman. Frau Rathsherr and her sister sat inside and her daughter rode behind.

"One day—it was not long before Christmas—the coachman came in. 'Herr Rathsherr,' said he, 'somebody has stolen the box from our carriage.'

"Well, the Herr Rathsherr was very angry, and went scolding up and down the room. Just at this moment his brother-in-law, the Herr Rathsherr Darius from Parschen, drove up to the door. In those days the Parschen magistrates were mostly men of mature years, who had sowed their wild oats, but the Herr Rathsherr Darius had still a great appetite for practical jokes.

"'Of what use is it while I am only playing Rathsherr to put on a long face and pretend to be wise?' so he went on cracking his jokes at the expense of other people.

"He was full of the pleasure of seeing his friends again, and the Herr Rathsherr Zarnekow was full of

vexation about the stolen box. When the women folk came in they were half glad at seeing their brother, and half sorry at not seeing the box. Their riding must be given up at present; there was no place for the coachman; for that he should sit behind with the daughter was not to be thought of. They talked about the matter for a while, and at last all went out to look at the carriage. The Herr Darius looked very carefully at the place where the box fitted on, and thought to himself, 'that would be a fine Christmas to make my sister.' He was going to Rostock on business, and could attend to the matter.

"After supper the two men talked over their city affairs—the new fire-engines, the jail, how often the streets should be swept, and how far the magistrates could interfere. When the two councilmen had settled all affairs to their satisfaction they went to bed and slept the sleep of the just.

"So the Herr Darius went to Rostock, and after five or six days he came back, and had a great box on the back of his carriage, and his brother-in-law Zarnekow asked, 'What have you in that great box?'

"Herr Darius thought this a great chance for a joke, and answered, 'Eh, just think of it! there was a fellow in Rostock with wild beasts, and he had a giraffe which had just died; and as I thought it would please our headmaster, I have brought the skin and bones for his cabinet of natural-history specimens in the high-school. I thought a giraffe would be such a good beginning;' and he thought to himself, 'What a surprise it will be when they open the box out of curiosity, to see the giraffe and discover the carriage box!'

"But the Herr Zarnekow was not so curious about giraffes, and when Herr Darius had gone off the next morning, and had taken particular care to leave the box behind him, Herr Zarnekow passed through the entry, and seeing it there exclaimed:

"'God bless me! there, Darius has gone off and forgotten his giraffe! Fika, run out and see if there is any way of sending it to Parschen!'

"An opportunity was soon found, and Herr Zarnekow said to the carrier, 'No letter is necessary; my compliments to Herr Darius, and I send him his giraffe.'

"As the carriage drew up to the Herr Rathsherr Darius' door in Parschen, and the carrier was taking down the box from the wagon, old Bohn the goldsmith stood by and asked:

"'What is in that box?'

"'A giraffe,' said the carrier.

"And Bohn the goldsmith told it to Freudenthaler the Jew, and Freudenthaler the Jew to Stand the distiller, and Stand the distiller to Hugendorp the baker, and an hour had not passed before the whole city was informed that Herr Rathsherr Darius had purchased a giraffe. Meanwhile Herr Darius was returning from the Council, and as he turned into the street where he lived, old Jochen Hugendorp, standing at his door, said, 'Good-morning, Herr Rathsherr; your giraffe has come!'

"'What the devil!' thought the Rathsherr. When he came to his own house there was old Bohn the goldsmith, who said, 'Herr Rathsherr, when you let the giraffe out of the box, let us see the beast.'

"The Herr Rathsherr suspected the state of things, and when he opened the door, sure enough! there stood his giraffe box.

"'What a blockhead of a brother-in-law!' cried he. 'I wanted to give him a pleasant surprise, and he has made me a laughing-stock to all the people. Throw the confounded thing out of the house!'

"Frau Darius now sent to make inquiries of the shopkeepers if there were any opportunities of sending to Güstrow and Rostock; she had a box to send to Güstrow and a lot of empty wine-bottles to Rostock. The maid soon returned, saying, 'Herr Zichurius sends his compliments, and Luakenborg the carrier is going to-morrow to Güstrow and Rostock, and if the Frau Rathsherr will trust him with the business he will attend to it.'

"So that was settled, and as the carrier was starting off the next morning, the shopkeeper, Zichurius, said to him:

"'Well, and the Frau Rathsherr's box?'

"'Yes,' laughed the carrier, 'the box with the giraffe! I know! The Frau Rathsherr herself told me. A droll piece of business, Herr Zichurius!'

"'Well, take good care of it, then,' said the shopkeeper, and the carrier drove off. The Herr Rathsherr was thoroughly vexed over his giraffe, and his poor wife had to suffer from his ill-temper, but after two or three days it passed off, and the Frau Rathsherr was sitting one day in quiet content over her coffee and saying to herself:

"'Thank Heaven! that unlucky business is over,' when the door opened and the post-boy brought in two letters, one for the Herr Rathsherr and one for herself, and both from Rostock.

"The Frau Rathsherr opened hers, and as she glanced at it, her hands fell down in her lap and she ejaculated, 'Good Heavens! what is this?'

"The wine merchant in Rostock wrote to say that the wine-bottles had arrived safely; also a box, which the carrier asserted contained a giraffe, and he wanted to know what he should do with it.

"She was walking up and down the room in despair, when I, your uncle Matthias, happened in, and she came up to me crying:

"'Uncle Matthias!'—for everybody uncled me, even then—'what shall I do? what shall I do? Do you know where that miserable giraffe is now?'

"'In Güstrow,' said I.

"'No, in Rostock,' and told me the whole story, saying if her husband knew of this new blunder, he would be perfectly wild with rage, and she would not have a moment's peace. Then she began to weep bitterly.

"I had to turn my face away, for I could not keep from laughing. Then I tried to comfort her.

"'Never mind, the giraffe shall arrive at his destination yet. I am going to Rostock to-morrow, and if you will trust the matter to me, I will see the confounded giraffe safely delivered to Herr Zarnekow when I come back to Güstrow. To-day is Tuesday; next Friday is Christmas Eve, so it will get there in the nick of time,'

"Well, she was very glad and very thankful, and when Herr Darius came in and said 'Good-evening' she made signs to me not to breathe a word to him, and gave him his letter from Rostock. He read the letter, and then smote angrily on the table with his fist.

"'The devil take the old lawsuit! I must go again to Rostock to-morrow.'

"'That is very convenient,' said I. 'I am going to Rostock also; we can travel together.'

"So we arranged it, and next morning we were off. When we came to Güstrow I said:

"'Will you not go round to your brother-in-law's while the horses are resting?'

"'No,' he said, getting angry, 'my brother-in-law is a blockhead, and his women folk are not a bit better, I wanted to give him a pleasant surprise, and he has made me a laughing-stock.'

"'Ah!' said I, 'because of the giraffe?'

"'Hold your tongue!' said he; 'I will hear nothing more of it. My brother-in-law has the box by this time, and I shall not give him a chance to laugh at me.'

"We arrived at Rostock and put up at the Sun. I had number 8 and he number 9. I went out to attend to some business, and first to wine merchant Ahlers.

"'Good-day, Ahlers,' said I, for I knew him very well; 'you got a box the other day from Frau Rathsherr Darius of Parschen?'

"'Yes,' said he, laughing, 'with the giraffe in it.'

"'Exactly,' said I; 'send it up to me at the Sun to-morrow morning. I am in number 8.'

"'All right,' said he, 'but if the beast were alive when he came, he must be dead by this time, for we have not fed him.'

"'No matter,' said I, and went away.

"When I came back late in the evening to my quarters and was going up to my room the waiter said:

"'No, sir; this way; you sleep in number 9. The Herr Rathsherr's bed was too short for him and he exchanged with you.'

"'Very well,' said I, thinking no harm; 'what a tall

fellow he is!' and I went to bed and slept till morning.

"I was sitting up drinking my coffee, when I heard a great uproar in the passage, and as I put my head out the door from curiosity, there was Herr Darius running about in his shirt, scolding and raving and foaming with rage; while two workmen stood by with a large box, twirling their caps and scratching their heads in great perplexity.

"'What is it?' said I.

"'That cursed giraffe!' cried he; and sprang into his room and slammed the door.

"I beckoned the carriers to bring the box to me, and I threw the bedclothes over it.

"It was not long before the Herr Rathsherr came into my room, and innocently sitting down on the giraffe box, began scolding these people and everybody else. It was all a contrived plan, and he knew his friends in Parschen who had managed it, but he would be even with them.

"'What did you tell them to do with the box?' I asked.

"'I told the fellows to throw it in the Warnow.'

"'Then make yourself easy about it. It is probably there by this time.'

"We talked about other things, and when I saw he was going, I said, 'Perhaps you had better sit on a chair; you might break through the cover of that box.'

"'What box?' he cried, springing up as stung by an adder.

"'Oh, your giraffe box!' and I pulled off the cover. He stood for a moment looking like a bull when a red cloth is shaken before it. Then he gave the box a vigorous kick. 'Cursed giraffe nonsense!' and left the room.

"The whole day he was as shy of me as a cat of hot porridge. He will never ride home with me to-morrow, I thought.

"Besides, I had promised the Frau Rathsherr to take the box to Güstrow, and I knew if he found it was in the

carriage he would not go a step; so I got the waiter to place the box in black-waxed linen and call our coachman.

"'Jochen take the box, and if the Herr Rathsherr asks what is in it, tell him a new English saddle which you are taking to Schregel at Möderitz.'

"The next morning we started, and as we drove in the darkness and mud he never said a word. But as near Hagen Sprenz we got down to rest the horses, he caught sight of the black box. He started and looked shyly, as if he had seen a goblin sitting behind. As I went into the house I noticed that he was asking Jochen about it. Jochen told the saddle story, and the Rathsherr was fairly good-natured after that. The roads were so bad we did not get to Güstrow until night; so as we sat together at the tavern I finally said:

"'This is Christmas Eve.'

"'Yes.'

"'Are you not going to see your brother-in-law?'

"'No,' said he shortly.

"'Well, I will go myself, then. I am well acquainted with him, and on Christmas Eve I would rather be in a pleasant family circle than in a tavern.'

"He did not like the idea of my going there without him; so he said:

"'Well, then, I will go with you for a little while.'

"So we went. But previously I had said to Jochen, 'About eight o'clock you are to take the black box and put it in the hall at Herr Rathsherr Zarnekow's, and cry out as loud as you can, "Yule-rap!"'

"When we reached Herr Zarnekow's the room was bright with candles, and the faces of the ladies and Herr Zarnekow bright with joy and hope, and even Herr Darius grew lighter of heart.

"But this did not last long. Hardly had he begun to feel warm and comfortable when his brother-in-law laid his hand on his shoulder in a friendly way.

"'Well, my dear brother-in-law, did you get your giraffe box all right?'

"Herr Darius looked at him doubtfully, to see what

he meant, but as he observed that his brother-in-law was perfectly honest, and that I looked quite innocent, he replied curtly:

"'Yes, yes, it was all right.'

"But then the ladies began to laugh, and asked how the head master was pleased, whether the creature was stuffed, and how large he was; the poor Rathsherr was suffering torments, and pushed his chair back and forth and answered merely, 'Yes,' and 'No,' and tore up his cigar in splinters and threw them spitefully about him.

"After the presents were given, which put an end to his annoyance, a great bowl of punch was brought in, and cakes and nuts and apples, and we were all as happy and jolly as could be. The Herr Rathsherr Zarnekow went up and down the room humming lively airs as he trimmed the candles, and laughing, whispered to me:

"'This is only the foretaste, the best is to come: I have an agreeable surprise for my women folk!'

"And the Frau Rathsherr bent over to me: 'See how happy Zarnekow is! He will be happier by and by; we are going to surprise him with a Yule-rap.'

"It was not long before the surprises began. 'Yule-rap,' called somebody at the door, and shoved a great package done up in cloth in the door. It was addressed to the Herr Rathsherr; he opened it, and what did he find?—a new carriage box.

"At first, the Herr Rathsherr's face wore a rather doubtful expression, and he looked at the ladies like a cow at a new door, but an explanation occurred to him, and he said to himself, 'What rogues they are! They have spied out my present, and mean to baste me with my own drippings.'

"'A good joke!' he laughed aloud, and pleasantly; the ladies laughed, too, and his sister-in-law said:

"'Zarnekow, you never thought of that, did you?'

"'Thought of it! *I* never thought of it! who did think of it, then? I thought—'

"'Yes,' said she, 'and we thought you had no idea of it, and it would be a surprise for you.'

"'For me!' asked the Herr Rathsherr in astonishment.

"'Yes, for you,' said his wife.

"'This is—' began the daughter—

"'Yule-rap!' was called at the door again, and just such another package was shoved in this time. 'For the Frau Rathsherr!' Another box!

"The Herr Rathsherr looked at the ladies, then at me, and then at his brother-in-law, and pushed back his smoking-cap, and finally said:

"'Well, two boxes! there is no help for it!'

"'Two boxes!' cried his wife, clasping her hands in dismay. 'Good gracious! Zarnekow, we thought—'

"'Yes,' said he, 'and I thought too—'

"And they began to defend themselves, and defence became recrimination. The Herr Rathsherr Darius was laughing in his sleeve, and said to me:

"'Thank God, my confounded box is on its travels—the devil knows where. If that should come too, the business would be complete!"

"'Yule-rap!' cried a voice in the hall.

"'So,' said I to myself, 'misfortune, take your course!' for I heard Jochen's voice in the hall. The door opened and my black box came in with the inscription, 'To the Herr Rathsherr and the Frau Rathsherr Zarnekow,' for I had got it ready myself.

"Scarcely had Herr Darius seen the black box when he sprang up and ran toward it. He looked as if he were ready to do battle.

"'Why, this is—this is—' and he looked at me suspiciously.

"'Addressed to me and my wife,' said Herr Zarnekow, and began to cut off the black cover. But the moment the box with its marks came to light Herr Darius pushed Herr Zarnekow aside, and seating himself on the box cover, and spreading his coat-tails over it, shouted, 'It is a mistake! this is a saddle for Schregel at Möderitz.'

"'No!' said Herr Zarnekow. 'No!' said his wife. 'No!' said I likewise. 'He is only joking.' He was dragged off the box amid great laughter, and as the marks appeared Herr Zarnekow cried:

"'Why, great Heavens! Darius, this is your giraffe box!'

"'Cursed box!' shouted he. 'Let me out! I want to go home.' But the ladies stood between him and the door; they did not know what was in the box.

"The Herr Rathsherr Darius threw himself on a sofa in the corner in silent rage and muttered:

"'Well, well, take your surprise, then! I have had enough of the kind! And as for you,' turning savagely on me, 'you may go home alone to-morrow; not another step will I ride with you!'

"So the box was opened and out came—a new carriage box! Bless me, what a face Herr Zarnekow had and how all the family looked.

"Herr Darius was now in a spiteful mood and laughed loudly:

"'Do you see, Zarnekow, you blockhead! you made me the sport of all Parschen sending the box after me; now you have your giraffe. You see, Zarnekow, it never rains but it pours. You see, Zarnekow, now let us put all three in a row and look at your presents. It is a pity you haven't another, and you could each have had a private box.'

"But he turned pale with terror, for the door opened again. Herr Zarnekow's coachman Frederic entered with something on his shoulder.

"'Herr Rathsherr,' he said, 'I have a pleasant surprise for you this Christmas Eve—our old box has been found.' And he set the fourth box down on the floor.

. . . . . .

"And now, my son," added Uncle Matthias, "you have a specimen of pleasant surprises; now make the application, and tell me what you were going to surprise your mother with!"

I opened my package and displayed a pair of spectacles.

"Oh," said he, "spectacles! what made you think of those?"

"Well," said I, "we were sitting around the table the other evening and mother was trying to thread her

needle, and it wouldn't go, and she got vexed over it and said, 'I certainly shall have to buy a pair of spectacles,' and so I thought of it."

"Well, wait a moment," said my uncle; and he called my sister.

"Lizette, what are you going to give your mother?"

"You mustn't tell, uncle—a pair of spectacles."

"And you, August?"

August was a ruddy boy, who stammered dreadfully. He could sing, however, so when he could not speak he was allowed to sing. August put on a broad smile and began to stammer.

"Sing, child," said my uncle. And August began to sing in a fine clear voice to the tune of the "Maiden's Wreath:

> "I'll give my mother some spectacles
> With a blue ribbon tie-ed."

"That will do, my son," and turned to me: "What do you say now?"

I had nothing to say.

"Don't you see," he went on, "your mother would have been more vexed than pleased over three pairs of spectacles? Come here," he added, stepping to the window. "What is that lying on the ground?"

"Snow," said I. "It is winter."

"Right," said he, "and if the Lord should surprise you in winter with soft warm weather, and in the summer with snow, you children would get the snuffles, and we old folks should catch our deaths of cold. This is the way the Lord does things, and he knows best. Even joy, when it is unexpected, has a taste of pain. Every experienced farmer will tell you that the richest and most prosperous year is that that runs its regular course, and I can tell you that the happiest human life is the one which, so far as possible, remains free from surprises."

With that he turned away, and his cheerful old face had grown sad.

Cherry Hill is scarcely so well known as Murray Hill, but its loves, joys, and sorrows differ only in their expression. This has an interest of its own, and is none the less heart-moving, as the readers of ROMANCE will discover in the following tale, which was originally told by Charles A. Brodhead in the *Evening Sun*.

MAGGIE KELLY'S CRISIS.

THAT the social season on Cherry Hill had not displayed the brilliancy that had marked it, from the time Miss Maggie Kelly had the leadership in such matters thrust upon her, was due entirely to the fact that the young lady had passed through a period of dangerous illness. At one time they thought the end had come. The doctor thought so, too, for he bent over her for many minutes before he was sure that she still continued to breathe.

Miss Kelly's illness started with a slight cold. It didn't bother her any at first, and she went to her work at the envelope factory with the same regularity that had characterized her for years. Then she began to feel worse. Her mother advised her to remain at home for a couple of days, but Miss Maggie would have none of it. At that particular time she was doing another girl's work in addition to her own, which meant that she would receive double the usual amount of pay when the week was ended.

The young lady needed the money very much, for she wished to attend the third annual ball of the Social Five, which was to occur during the following week. On that occasion she had proposed to appear in a costume that would delight the hearts of her friends and still the adverse criticism of her enemies.

Mr. Slobsy Carroll, with much pleading in his tones, had begged of her to accompany him to the ball. She had refused the gentleman at first, and very frankly told him her reasons for so doing.

"If I go with you," she said, "you'll go off'n git a

jag on, an' then you'll commence to spout tragedy, an' somebody'll sock yer in the eye'n there'll be a scrap. I don't want no scrappers takin' me to a ball." Mr. Carroll was much hurt upon hearing why Miss Kelly did not care to go to the ball with him. Then he protested against her classification.

"I ain't no scrapper, Mag," he said. "I'm a actor."

The young lady referred to a disturbance which Mr. Carroll had started at the last party she gave in order to prove her assertion. Mr. Carroll protested with much vehemence that it was not he, but the quantity of beer he had imbibed on that occasion which was responsible for the outbreak.

Miss Kelly naively remarked that perhaps the beer might be responsible for another such scene, but Mr. Carroll hastened to assure her that such would not be the case. He even went so far as to hope he might die on the spot if he would become involved in any quarrel at the ball. He was so far successful in convincing Miss Kelly that he would behave himself if only she would go with him, that finally she consented.

Her mother was not altogether pleased with the choice Miss Maggie had made for a partner at the ball. "Shure," the old lady had said, "yer moight betther had wint wid Mike Welch. He's a nice, quiet, dacent, good young man."

"I know he is, maw," the young woman replied. "He's too good. If Slobsy don't git full he'll be all right."

"Yes, if he don't," the mother responded grimly.

It really seemed as if the fates were against her accompanying Mr. Carroll, for the very day after she had consented she commenced to feel ill. Three days later she was unable to rise from her bed, and the doctor was called in.

"Your daughter will have a hard time of it," he told the young lady's mother. A heavy fever set in, and on the evening set for the ball Miss Kelly was delirious.

Then the doctor said the critical time was at hand and that the young woman's recovery depended as much

on careful nursing as his medicines. He said that no noise should be made that would disturb the patient. Miss Tessie Brady said she would see that the injunction was carried out.

Miss Brady had come out in a new light since her friend Maggie became ill. From the very first she had been at Miss Maggie's side.

Without her the Kellys could have obtained no rest, for a ceaseless vigil was maintained over the patient. For the first few nights Miss Brady went to her own home shortly after midnight. Mr. Carroll always loitered about the neighborhood until Miss Brady came out. Then, while he was walking home with her, she would tell him how Maggie was getting along.

When the physician announced that his patient's life hung only by a thread, Miss Brady neglected her work altogether, and remained constantly at the bedside of her friend. She told Mr. Carroll that Maggie might die at any moment. He could not believe it. "Air, yer lie," he said jocosely. Miss Brady assured him that what she said was the simple truth. Then he stared at her blankly and said, "Gee!"

When the doctor came that evening he said he thought he'd stay awhile. He told Mrs. Kelly that if her daughter's senses did not return by midnight she might expect the worst.

That evening saw the father and mother with Miss Brady, sitting at the bedside of the social queen of Cherry Hill. The neighbors who were obliged to go up and down stairs did so on tiptoe and made no sound in the halls.

Then the doctor came in, examined the young woman, and said he might want some one to go to the nearest drug store in a hurry. Miss Brady said she would look after that matter and straightway proceeded to the street door, where Mr. Carroll was standing patiently. In a few words she told him of Miss Kelly's condition and warned him not to go away, as he might be needed at any moment.

She returned upstairs in time to hear the physician

say that he was not yet able to tell what the result would be. Mrs. Kelly began to sob softly, while her husband every now and then brushed the back of one hand across his eyes. Finally the mother's heart could stand it no longer. She stepped softly over to the bed and knelt beside it.

Then she extended one arm, and ever so slowly and gently placed it beneath her daughter's head. The other arm was put half-way around the girl's body. The figure beside the bed began to sway to and fro, and from the mother's lips there issued a lullaby that had not been heard in the Kelly household for years.

At first it was faint like a sigh, but soon grew a little louder and steadier. The physician came in, looked for a moment, and then turned away without a word.

It seemed like hours to Miss Brady before the physician again came in. He raised his finger to the mother, and the singing and rocking ceased. After watching the patient for a moment, he hastily wrote a prescription. He handed it to Miss Brady and told her the quicker the medicine was procured the more chance there was of saving the patient's life.

The young woman went swiftly down the stairs and to the door. Mr. Carroll was there.

"Slobsy," she said excitedly, "go over to the drug store an' git this quick. If yer don't hurry up, Mag—"

But Slobsy was already gone. He dashed across the street and around the corner like a flash. A moment later the drug-store door was thrown violently open and Mr. Carroll bounded in.

He approached a clerk with Titian hair, and said: "Hey, young feller! Gimme this's quick ez yer kin."

He then threw the prescription on the counter. The clerk picked it up in a leisurely manner and scanned it carelessly. Then he asked: "Are you in a hurry?"

"Yair," Mr. Carroll responded, surprised that any one would think otherwise.

"Well, you'll have to wait until your hurry's over," came from the other, in a cool, breezy manner.

Mr. Carroll's brow lowered ominously. "S-aa-y,

young feller," he said, very slowly and distinctly, "do you mean that?"

"Of course I—" The clerk never got any further than that, nor could any one who happened to be in the place at the time tell just what happened. They saw something bound over the counter, heard a thud, saw the proprietor run out, wave his arms, and then saw a piece of paper thrust into his hand.

"Gimme that quick or I'll break yer jaw, see!" they heard a voice exclaim, and then they saw a young man throw some money on the counter and dash out of the place at his best speed. Slobsy handed the package to Miss Brady and a moment later the physician had administered it. For another half-hour they waited. Mrs. Kelly went into the kitchen. The patient was lying quite still now, and the doctor was bending over her.

Suddenly her eyes opened. They rolled from one side to the other in an inquiring way. Then the lips were parted, and from them came faintly: "Where's me ole woman?"

"She'll come through all right now," the doctor said, and Miss Brady commenced to cry. A few moments later and the doctor passed out of the house. A block away he was followed by a square-shouldered young man who walked with a swagger. The doctor was in a hard neighborhood, so he grasped his heavy cane more firmly.

The figure soon came up with him and stopped. The physician looked into the other's face and half raised his cane. Then the other spoke. He said:

"Hey, Doc. On the dead level, is—"

"Well?" asked the physician sharply.

"Is she—she dead, you know, up there?" indicating the Kellys' home with his finger.

"Oh, no!" he answered with a feeling of relief. "She'll be out again in a week or two."

Then the man of medicine wondered why the other shook his hand so heartily and proceeded to execute softly a jig on the sidewalk.

This story shows what perils a man will encounter to gain the woman he loves. It is a story meet for all seasons, but this ended happily, as all love-stories should, and on Christmas Day. That it was written by Tom Hood may also add to its interest.

FULL FATHOM FIVE.

I WAS a diver as a young man, I may say I was born a diver, for my father was one before me. You may have heard of him—Bill Hurst was his name; he was pretty well known in his time, and almost the first that ever went down in the dress without a bell. Even when I started at it, there were not many in the business. Father began to train me for it early, and consequently from habit and experience I got to be considered a first-rate hand, and got my share of employment.

But, you see, diving isn't like other things—it's not as good as fishing even. Of course you can't always be sure of a catch, but fish are always salable when you *can* catch them. There's a constant demand for the article. But with diving it's different. You can't always expect ships to be sinking with valuables aboard, or that people should be constantly building piers or bridges, or things of that kind. Consequently I wasn't making a fortune at the best of times, while at the worst of 'em I had sometimes to turn my hand to other jobs, such as shipping on board coasters or packet-boats for a spell now and then.

It was at one of these hard times that I had shipped aboard a small schooner that was bound for Liverpool. We were just passing that point there, with the tide against us, when we saw a great big steamer coming round the Bolt, as the point is called. They were keeping a mighty poor lookout on board that boat, for, though when we saw she was coming straight down upon us, we hallooed and rung bells, they didn't take a bit of notice. Our skipper rammed the tiller hard a-port, hoping we should swing off and the steamer only graze

our stern. But, unluckily, the wind fell dead all of a sudden, just for a minute or two, but quite long enough to settle our fate. The steamer struck the schooner full amidships, and cut her in half like so much cheese. I was knocked down by the wreck of our foremast, which broke my leg. I became insensible, but, going down with the vessel, was brought to myself by the cold water, and contrived with difficulty to swim ashore.

There was a pretty fair crowd collected by the time I reached land, and by somebody's orders a shutter was fetched, and I was carried to the nearest farm-house—the very one that belongs to me now.

My leg was set all right, but I took a fever, and was very bad for some time. The farmer was for sending me off to a hospital; but his daughter—that's my wife that is—begged of him not to do it. He was a widower and she was his only child, so she generally got her way in most things. I wasn't sent away. By and by I got a bit better, and was able to creep about the house with a stick, or sit outside in the sun. The farmer was mostly out looking after his crops and his cattle, except at meal-times; so Polly and I saw a good deal of one another, and very naturally fell in love.

It was a very pleasant time for a bit, before I got thoroughly strong and well. But as soon as I began to feel I was getting fit for work again, I began to long to be at it. I felt that I was in fact no better than a beggar, and I knew the farmer would be furious to think of my daring to make love to his child, who was reckoned the heiress as well as the beauty of the place.

Polly was unreasonable, like women mostly are in such matters, and wouldn't hear of my going away. She laughed at the idea of my wishing to work again, and said she was sure her father, if he objected to our loving one another at first, would be safe to give in to her at the end.

Well, unluckily, she soon had an opportunity of finding out that she wasn't quite so powerful over her father as she thought.

One afternoon the farmer came home unexpectedly to fetch some medicine for one of the cows, that had been suddenly taken ill. Polly and I, never dreaming of such a chance, were on the settle by the fire, I with my arm around her waist and she with her head on my shoulder. It was a very pretty picture, perhaps, for some of those illustrated papers, but, I can tell you, it didn't suit his taste anyhow.

Well, there was a pretty row, I can assure you. The old man would have struck me but for Polly. He ordered me out of the house at once, as an ungrateful rogue and vagabond. Then Polly tried her powers of persuasion, for he wouldn't listen to a word from me. At first he wouldn't give heed to her; but by degrees she got him calmer. At long and at last she got him to sit down and hear what I had to say.

It wasn't very much beyond that I loved Polly. I could only say that I hoped I should get work, and save money, and that sort of thing. He laughed at the idea. "What could we live on if we married?" Polly jumped up and said she could and would work at needlework, or she'd go into service—anything; and then she burst out crying, and went into hysterics. That touched the old man a bit, and somehow or another, after a long time he consented to give me a twelvemonth's grace. If I could come back at the end of it with a prospect of earning a fair living, I might have Polly. But she declared that I shouldn't be fit to work for some months yet, and that the twelvemonth should begin from when I was well and strong. So her father said, "It's autumn now—I'll give him a twelvemonth from Christmas!" And with that he stalked out of the room to give orders about the cow's medicine.

Polly and I had a long consultation, and I persuaded her at last that the sooner I started, the better was my chance of getting a good position. So she very unwillingly gave way to my going at once. So I packed up my few things in a handkerchief—my bag had been brought ashore from the wreck of the schooner at low

water—and with a couple of pounds in my pocket, which Polly had insisted on my taking of her, if only as a loan, I set out to London.

"I shall come, never fear!" said I, as I turned from the door.

"So will Christmas!" said the farmer crustily, as he came in at the gate just as I got to it.

"So will the Christmas after!" said I; and I strode out with the best appearance of hope and cheerfulness I could muster, until I was out of sight. Then all my pluck left me, and I tramped along drearily enough till at length I saw the long lines of gas-lamps, and knew I was in London streets once more.

They're uncommonly hard and pitiless things, the London streets, as I found them. All that autumn I tried my best to get something by way of employment. But it was all no use. I applied over and over again, but was always met with the same remark, "We want a man with some knowledge of the business," as if everybody mustn't begin at some time or other. Men can't be born with "a knowledge of the business," or put it on ready-made, like a livery.

Every now and then I was obliged to go back to the old sailoring, and ship on board some vessel for a trip, just to get something to live on. How my heart used to ache as the ship, dropping down the river, passed along by this ferry!

In the spring I shipped on board a trader bound for Wales for copper ore. We had one passenger on board, a friend of the captain's. They were shareholders in several mines, and had done business together for years. The passenger—his name was Turton—was very rich, but very speculative. The captain used often to rate him for such gambling rashness, as he called it.

"You'll sink all your money, some of these days, as deep as the doubloons in the ships over there," said he to Turton one day as we were sailing along the Cornish coast.

"What ships?—where?" said the other.

"Do you see those breakers yonder," said the cap-

tain, "about half a mile to the windward of the southern point of that low, rocky little island? That's called Galleon Reef, and it is said that a fleet of Spanish treasure-ships were sunk there to prevent their falling into the hands of our men-of-war that were after them."

"Has any of the money ever been found?" asked Turton.

"Yes, a few pieces now and then. There was a company started once—by some such speculative madcaps as you—but somehow or another it all came to nothing."

"Egad! I don't see why it shouldn't be done nowadays, with all our modern diving inventions."

"Oh, if you're for diving," said the captain, "here's your man;" and he turned to me. I had come aft to relieve the man at the wheel. I was a bit of a favorite with the captain, for steadiness and sobriety, and he had asked me questions, and I had told him who and what I was.

"Are you a diver, my man?" said Turton.

"I believe you! John Hurst is one of the best and most skilful divers we have," said the captain, who then called for another hand to take the wheel in my place.

Turton asked me many questions, and often during the rest of the voyage would come to me and talk about the probabilities of recovering the treasure from the Spanish wrecks. He left us at Swansea, where we had to take in our cargo, after landing the freight we had brought out. In due time we returned to London, and my engagement being up, I left the ship and forgot all about Mr. Turton and the Spanish galleons.

One day, however, as I happened to be passing across Tower Hill, I heard some one hailing me. I looked across the street and saw it was my late captain. I went over to him, when he took out of his pocket a bit cut from the *Times*, containing an advertisement, in which I was requested to communicate at once with T. T., at his offices in Old Broad Street.

"That's Tom Turton," said the captain; "he's going

to fish for the treasure-ships. Lose no time in going to him. If he's fool enough to throw his money into the sea, you may as well get the benefit as any one else."

I set off at once, as he directed me. I saw Mr. Turton, who showed me the prospectus of a company which he had raised for the purpose of trying to recover the money in the lost treasure-ships. The adventurers were not many in point of numbers, he told me, but they were all wealthy; and, like himself, they delighted in speculation for its own sake. He wished me to report what would be required to set about the search with.

In a few days I sent in what I estimated as necessary for the attempt. I proposed to begin in as economical a manner as possible, and with a small staff. A couple of divers would be sufficient to examine the reef and see what truth there was in the report, and, if it proved true, to calculate what amount of money could be got out of the vessels. It would then be easy to send as many additional hands as necessary.

Mr. Turton declared himself greatly pleased with my scheme, and offered me the command of the divers, with very good wages. He said that I should be accompanied by a diver on whose behalf one of the shareholders had applied to him for a post.

He told me that, in order to carry on the exploration with as little delay and intermission as possible, they had rented the small island situated near the reef; and that they would send out huts to be erected on it for us and the crew, and would forward at the same time an ample supply of all sorts of stores and necessaries.

This all seemed very hopeful to me, and I began to think my chance had come at last. I wrote and told Polly so.

I only discovered one drawback in the affair. It turned out that my partner was a diver of the name of Bleggs, a quarrelsome, ill-conditioned fellow, with not the best of characters. I felt it my duty to tell Mr. Turton thus much, but he said it couldn't be helped, for Bleggs' patron was one of the largest and most influential shareholders, and that he wanted Bleggs

appointed to the post I had; and Bleggs would have had it but for Mr. Turton's tact and energy, and the respect the other adventurers felt for him.

Bleggs knew this; for the first time we met he said something about my luck in having friends at court to get me above the heads of better men. "Well," he continued gruffly, "it's no odds. We shall soon see who does best for the company—skipper or man; and then, perhaps, a meddling secretary may get a wigging" —meaning Mr. Turton, who had been honorary secretary *pro tem.* I didn't wish, in the interests of the adventure, to quarrel with Bleggs, but I gave him to understand that I wouldn't have such language, and that once on Spanish Island, as our location was called, I should expect implicit obedience to orders.

In due time the island was reached, the stores were landed, and the huts built. We had a good-sized steam-launch to take us out to the reef. She was fitted with two powerful air-pumps. Our diving dresses were of the best and newest pattern. Everything looked well for success; the only thing that presented an obstacle was the frequent occurrence of bad weather. We could only take the launch among the rocks when the sea was pretty smooth, and, indeed, could not have made a descent without great risk when it was very rough.

Seizing every opportunity, I began the search. We were not long in discovering the remains of the wrecked ships. It was impossible to tell how many vessels there had been, for they had broken up and fallen to pieces, and the winter storms had spread dire havoc among them. Only one hulk retained any semblance of a ship.

We explored the ocean bed carefully. I meant to examine the hulk first, but allowed myself to be dissuaded by Bleggs, who urged that, as what we wanted was to learn as quickly as possible if there was gold, we had better examine the ships which the sea had broken up for us, and so save ourselves the trouble of breaking up the hulk.

The work was too fatiguing, and I found, to my cha-

grin, that Bleggs surpassed me in strength and endurance, for I suffered very severely from pain in the leg that had been fractured.

So far our search had been unsuccessful. At last I observed something that made me suspect that Bleggs was playing me tricks. Happening to make my descent after him somewhat more rapidly than usual, I found him emerging from the hulk. He assured me afterward that he had only gone there for mussels.

A day or two afterward—Bleggs having meantime obtained leave to "go ashore," as we called visiting the mainland—I observed that a man was constantly hanging about the reef, fishing in an open boat. It was not a very good fishing-ground, and it was some distance from shore for an open boat; but I noticed that this stranger always remained at his moorings till after dark. He was not very communicative—indeed, he growled at our manœuvres, saying that we drove the fish away. At the same time I discovered that he was not a native, for he did not speak the local dialect.

My suspicions were aroused at last, when turning round suddenly one day, while we were preparing to descend, I saw Bleggs signalling to the solitary fisherman. I said nothing, but determined to investigate.

All that night I lay awake thinking, and rose in the morning with a matured plan. When Bleggs and I had finished our mid-day meal, which was cooked on board the boat, I ordered him to go to the mainland and fetch some paper, under the pretence that I had none in store and must write my report that night. Bleggs went grumblingly, and as soon as I saw him disappear behind the island I jumped overboard.

I made my way to the hulk and entered it. A very short survey sufficed to show me that the contents of its hold had been recently disturbed. Making my way down, I was speedily engaged in clearing the sand and weed, beneath which I soon came upon some large wooden cases, so rotted that a very few blows of my axe shivered the lid of one and revealed the contents.

There lay masses of what, in spite of their being so

oxidized by the action of the salt water, I could see were gold and silver coins. The sight at first surprised and delighted me, then came an excess of rage at the treachery of Bleggs, who had concealed this treasure from me, and was evidently helping himself to the contents of the chest, though how I knew not.

I began to search the hold narrowly for some trace of the manner in which he removed the coin. In a remote corner I came on a bundle of rawhide and several coils of thin but strong line. Beside these lay a knife, which I identified as his, and therefore took possession of as a bit of evidence against him. Then I ascended to the deck again and looked about me. I could see a place where the bulwarks had evidently been cut away quite lately, and beyond it, in the sand which had drifted up almost level with the deck, I could see a trail as if heavy bodies had been dragged along. I followed it, and was guided to two large packages, consisting of rawhide, and evidently full of coins. A line was attached to them. I followed it with my eye up toward the surface of the water as far as I could see. I was about to pull it in order to discover whether it was attached to some floating buoy, when I made out through the dim green haze of heaving water a dark object, which I immediately guessed was the boat of the uncommunicative fisherman.

Well might that morose personage cast line after line into the sea if this was the sort of catches he made! I saw at once why he stayed out until it grew dark. It was to haul in his prize unobserved. I determined he should have his labor for nothing this once, at any rate. I would tie his lines to a mass of rock and let him pull that up! I should want some cord for this purpose, and, remembering the coil in the hold of the vessel, I went back to seek it.

While I was groping my way in the hold, I felt a sudden jerk at my signal-line, which, as you are aware, is attached round a diver's waist. I supposed it must have caught on some projection on the wreck. The next minute I found it was broken, for it hung loose.

As I put my hand behind me to the knot of the signal-line to make sure that this was the case, I experienced a violent push from behind, which flung me down on my face. Before I could recover myself, or even wonder what was amiss, I felt my hands caught in a slip-noose, drawn forcibly together behind, and bound fast by the wrists.

By this time I had guessed who my assailant was. Bleggs had somehow managed to return very much sooner than he should have done, and had come down and surprised me.

He raised me to my feet, when a violent struggle ensued. But he was my master; I was powerless with my hands bound, so he forced me back against an upright support and lashed me to it.

I felt a sense of relief, for I knew that, although he had cut my signal-rope, my staying down so long after he ascended would alarm the men in our boat, and some means would be taken to free me.

But I had miscalculated my enemy's malice. You may have observed in a diver's helmet two little brass discs, perforated like the rose of a watering-pot. One of these is constantly in use, allowing the superfluous or vitiated air to escape. The second is for use in case of the other being clogged or damaged. Both are so arranged that, on being turned half round, they are closed and shut in the air, whereupon the diver becomes so buoyant that he rises to the surface.

Bleggs came up to me, made a mocking bow, as if to take farewell, and then closed both the escape-valves of my helmet. All the horror of my situation flashed on me! He intended to murder me. With every stroke of the air-pump would come a greater pressure of air, which by its increasing weight would kill me after the most awful tortures.

Before I had recovered from the shock Bleggs had disappeared, and already the strokes of the air-pump seemed to beat on my brain like sledge-hammers. I writhed and twisted and tore at my fastenings with the strength of a desperate man. The agony became

intense. All of a sudden I felt that I held some hard substance in my hand. It was the knife I had picked up. I had instinctively gripped it hard even in my struggle with Bleggs. But it was closed. Still the pressure increased; I felt as if my head would burst; my eyeballs seemed filled with fire, my breath was choked, my brain began to swim.

Now or never, thought I. I managed to hold the knife against the timber with the back of one hand, and with the other open its blade. Directly it was open I thrust it into my diving dress, which, with the pressure of the air, was distended like a balloon. With the bubbling sound that denoted the escape of the air through the hole thus made came an immediate sense of relief. The hope of escape gave me fresh strength, and I speedily released myself from my bonds.

The hole I had made was in the leg of my trousers. I took some of the cord that had bound me, and after tying it as tight as I could round my leg above the hole, was able to turn on my regular escape-valve and breathe with comparative freedom.

In a few moments I had gained the deck, and, closing the valve, was rapidly borne to the surface. I came up just under the quarter, and, as I laid my hand on the rope-ladder to climb up the side, I heard Bleggs' voice.

"Governor's a long time down! Something queer there; wouldn't let me stay down. Found the swag, p'raps, and wants it for himself. I wonder when he means coming up?"

"Now!" said I, climbing up and showing myself over the bulwarks. Bleggs fell back as if he had been shot.

"Seize him and bind him hand and foot!" said I to the men, who obeyed me with some wonder.

At this moment, looking in the direction of our fisher friend, I saw him preparing to make for shore. I immediately ordered three of the crew into the boat to give chase. They caught him after a smart race.

To make a long story short, we traced the stolen treasure to this man's hut on the opposite side of the island to ours, and he and Bleggs were taken before the

nearest magistrate and the whole case laid before him. The magistrate discharged Bleggs' accomplice. The treasure-ships were not our property, and the man was not in our employ, so there was no case against him.

But with Bleggs it was quite another affair, said the justice, though it was unnecessary to go into that part of the question, as he should commit him for trial on the charge of attempting to murder.

As he said this my overpent feelings gave way, and, turning round giddily, as if in search of support, I fell all in a heap on the floor.

From that time there was a long blank until I came to myself and found I was lying in a bed, attended by a nurse, for I had been raging with brain fever.

My recovery was very, very slow. At last, when I was strong enough, they told me that I had been laid up for a long time, during which my enemy had been kept in prison, until, growing weary of confinement, he had confessed all to Mr. Turton, and being allowed to plead guilty, had been transported.

I wrote to Mr. Turton to ask him for the wages that were due at the time of my illness, and to thank him for his kindness in providing me, as I learnt he had done, with nursing and medical attendance.

In a couple of days I received a letter from him, inclosing me a check for a thousand pounds, with the thanks of the company for my fidelity and vigilance in their interests. They had raised an immense quantity of treasure. I need hardly say how grateful I was or how soon I gained health and strength then. I made my way up to town as soon as I could and went straight to Polly.

It was the day before Christmas Day, and she was putting up the holly. I saw her through the window, so I slipped in quietly by the back door and crept up and caught her in my arms. It was a foolish trick, for she just gave me one look, and then fainted dead off.

But no harm came of it: and—well, sir, the thousand pounds satisfied the farmer, and we were married. And a better wife a man couldn't have.

A case of misappropriation which everybody will approve. It was written for ROMANCE by J. S. Breckens.

OLD POVERTY'S MONUMENT.

"TWENTY-ONE in the red; the lucky red. Fifteen in the black; everybody wins." This and like information called out in the querulous voice of Old Poverty was as familiar to me as the rattle of chips and the suppressed voices of the gamblers.

It was in Cheyenne, in 1867. The railway had just reached the town and made it the western terminus for several months. Graders, miners, soldiers, bull-whackers, mule-skinners, Indians, Chinamen, Mexicans, and adventurers from every State in the nation and almost every country in the world formed the greater part of the population. Money was plentiful and everybody gambled.

The fascinations of the gambling halls proved too much for any scruples I held, and soon I was a constant player. I was generally a winner, and before long my skilful playing attracted the attention of the proprietors of the Wave, and I was offered the position of dealer at one of the faro-banks at a good salary, and accepted it.

It was a risky occupation. Scarcely a night passed without a fight in which guns or knives were drawn, and not a month went by without the fatal termination of some quarrel.

I had a narrow escape one night when Big Bill Rogers, the caller at the roulette wheel, was shot dead by a miner who accused him of stealing his chips. A bullet fired in the melee whizzed so close to my head that I felt shaky and nerveless for several hours after the fight was over. Rogers was an unpopular man about the Wave, and when we found among his effects some letters giving the names of his people back East, it was hard to find

any one who would take the trouble to inform them of his death. I finally did it, omitting, however, the details of the event.

Big Bill's successor was Old Poverty. He was a watery-eyed, hollow-cheeked, dilapidated wreck who had haunted the Wave for several weeks. Three callers at the wheel had died violent deaths and the place was not much sought after, and when Old Poverty asked for it he got it without any trouble.

Despite his calling, Old Poverty had an honest look, and he was a favorite with the rough crowd of cowboys, graders, and miners that surged around the roulette table, and fights in that corner of the house became less frequent. His honest face did not belie him, and the proprietors of the Wave trusted thousands of dollars to him without the usual watchers employed to spot the movements of a roulette caller. He was generous, and every man about the house knew that if he should go broke Old Poverty would stake him if he had the money.

Where Old Poverty came from; what his name was; why, with such an honest, square look in his face, he was a gambler no one knew or cared, but certain it was that the first genuine feeling of sorrow that entered the Wave was the evening that Old Poverty failed to show up for his night trick at the wheel, and later on it was learned that a hemorrhage had sapped his life-blood and he was dead.

He was the first man connected with the establishment who had died a natural death, and he was given a fine funeral. A minister rode at the head of the procession, and all the employees of the Wave, the carmine-cheeked dance-girls, bartenders, croupiers, callers, short-card men, and even the colored porter followed the hearse in hacks. In respect to his memory all the games were stopped during the time of the funeral and for two hours after. It was the first time since the Wave had opened its doors, day or night, that the whirr of the ivory ball around the roulette wheel, the click of chips in the restless fingers of the faro players, the slap of cards on the

hardwood tables, and the monotonous tones of the man at the wheel, calling "Fifteen in the red" or "Twenty in the black," had been hushed for even an hour.

The bar, however, was opened up as soon as the mourners returned from the funeral, and afforded means, which were not neglected, of gradually but surely removing the general depression the funeral had caused.

In front of the bar a number of employees of the house were drinking industriously to Old Poverty's memory when a boy brought me a letter from the post-office. It was from Big Bill Rogers' folks and enclosed a draft for $250, with directions to expend it in putting a monument over his grave. I read the letter aloud to the boys, and they were all astonished at the contents. The death of Big Bill had been almost forgotten, but this letter recalled all the circumstances, and naturally brought out comparisons between him and Old Poverty.

The kindness of Old Poverty was recalled by many reminiscences. His willingness to give up his last cent to help any man out of luck was in striking contrast to the disposition of Big Bill, who was a bully and was overbearing in his treatment of every one with whom he came in contact. In fact, it was generally agreed that "Old Poverty was on the square and Big Bill was crooked."

"It's pretty tough, gentlemen," said Syd Harris, a faro dealer, "that this here onery Big Bill Rogers, that no one had any use for, is going to get a regular marble-topped monument, and Old Poverty, that we all banked on, gets nothing."

Everybody agreed that this state of affairs was tough, but beyond setting them up again for the crowd no one advanced any remedy until Jack Ryan, who called the wheel on the afternoon trick, said: "Gentlemen, I move that when we buy this here monument for Big Bill we put it over Old Poverty and let Bill go to hell."

A more popular proposition could not have been suggested, and there was not a dissenting voice against it. Its adoption was a finishing tribute to Old Poverty's virtues, and all hands returned to the fascinations of

poker, faro, or roulette with a load of care apparently lifted.

In about two months the monument came from Omaha. It was placed over Old Poverty's grave, and as it was the first marble tombstone put up in the cemetery, it was pointed out with pride by the fraternity, until with the growth of the town more pretentious monuments eclipsed it.

Now it is stained and discolored by time and weather. The inscription can hardly be read, and when deciphered by those unfamiliar with its history it seems a strange epitaph, for it is as follows:

IN MEMORY
of
OLD POVERTY,
Died December 4, 1867.
ERECTED BY WILLIAM ROGERS.

The opportunities of fishing and of the tea-table for falling in love are contrasted in this story, and although from different points of view, the results seem to be the same. This will surprise no thoughtful person, and every one will be interested in the story, which was told by Stanley J. Weyman in the *English Illustrated Magazine.*

BAB.

I.—HER STORY.

"CLARE," I said, "I wish that we had brought some better clothes, if it were only one frock. You look the oddest figure."

And she did. She was lying head to head with me on the thick moss that clothed one part of the river bank above Breistolen near the Sogn Fiord. We were staying at Breistolen, but there was no moss thereabouts, nor in all the Sogn district, I often thought, so deep and soft, and so dazzling orange and white and crimson as that particular patch. Little more than a mile higher up was the water-shed, where our river, putting away with reluctance a first thought of going down the farther slope toward Bysberg, parted from its twin brother, who was thither bound with scores upon scores of puny, green-backed fishlets; and instead, came down our side gliding and swishing and swirling faster and faster and deeper and wider every hundred yards to Breistolen, full of red-speckled yellow trout, all half a pound apiece, and very good to eat.

But they were not so sweet or toothsome to our girlish tastes as the tawny-orange cloud-berries which Clare and I were eating as we lay. So busy was she with the luscious pile we had gathered that I had to wait for an answer. And then, "Speak for yourself," she said. "I'm sure you look like a short-coated baby. He is somewhere up the river, too." Munch, munch, munch!

"Who is, you impertinent, greedy little chit?"

"Oh, you know," she answered. "Don't you wish you had your gray plush here, Bab?"

I flung a look of calm disdain at her; but whether it was the berry juice which stained our faces that took from its effect, or the free mountain air which papa says saps the fountains of despotism, that made her callous, at any rate she only laughed scornfully and got up and went off down the stream with her rod, leaving me to finish the cloud-berries, and stare lazily up at the snow patches on the hillside—which somehow put me in mind of the gray plush—and follow or not as I liked.

Clare has a wicked story of how I gave in to papa, and came to start without anything but those rough clothes. She says he said—and Jack Buchanan has told me that lawyers put no faith in anything that he says she says, or she says he says, which proves how much truth there is in this—that if Bab took none but her oldest clothes, and fished all day, and had no one to run upon her errands—he meant Jack and the others, I suppose—she might possibly grow an inch in Norway. Just as if I wanted to grow an inch! An inch indeed! I am five feet one and a half high, and papa, who puts me an inch shorter, is the worst measurer in the world. As for Miss Clare, she would give all her inches for my eyes. So there!

After Clare left it began to be dull and chilly. When I had pictured to myself how nice it would be to dress for dinner again, and chosen the frock I would wear upon the first evening, I grew tired of the snow patches, and started up stream, stumbling and falling into holes, and clambering over rocks, and only careful to save my rod and my face. It was no occasion for the gray plush, but I had made up my mind to reach a pool which lay, I knew, a little above me, having filched a yellow-bodied fly from Clare's hat with a view to that particular place.

Our river did the oddest things hereabouts—pleased to be so young, I suppose. In one place it would sweep over a ledge and fall wreathed in spray into a spreading lake of black, rock-bound water. Then it would narrow again until, where you could almost jump across, it darted smooth and unbroken down a polished

shoot with a swoop like a swallow's. Out of this it would hurry afresh to brawl along a gravelly bed, skipping jauntily over first one and then another ridge of stones that had silted up weir-wise and made as if they would bar the channel. Under the lee of these there were lovely pools.

To be able to throw into mine, I had to walk out along the ridge on which the water was shallow, yet sufficiently deep to cover my boots. But I was well rewarded. The *forellin*—the Norse name for trout, and as pretty as their girls' wavy, fair hair—were rising so merrily that I hooked and landed one in five minutes, the fly falling from its mouth as it touched the stones. I hate taking out hooks. I used at one time to leave the fly in the fish's mouth to be removed by papa at the weighing-house; until Clare pricked her tongue at dinner with an almost new red tackle, and was so mean as to keep it, though I remembered then what I had done with it, and was certain it was mine—which was nothing less than dishonest of her.

I had just got back to my place and made a fine cast, when there came—not the leap, and splash, and tug which announced the half-pounder—but a deep, rich gurgle as the fly was gently sucked under, and then a quiet, growing strain upon the line, which began to move away down the pool in a way that made the winch spin again and filled me with mysterious pleasure. I was not conscious of striking or of anything but that I had hooked a really good fish, and I clutched the rod with both hands and set my feet as tightly as I could upon the slippery gravel. The line moved up and down, and this way and that, now steadily and as with a purpose, and then again with an eccentric rush that made the top of the rod spring and bend so that I looked for it to snap each moment. My hands began to grow numb, and the landing-net, hitherto an ornament, fell out of my waist-belt and went I knew not whither. I suppose I must have stepped unwittingly into deeper water, for I felt that my skirts were afloat, and altogether things were going dreadfully against

me, when the presence of an ally close at hand was announced by a cheery shout from the far side of the river.

"Keep up your point! Keep up your point!" some one cried briskly. "That is better!"

The unexpected sound—it was a man's voice—did something to keep my heart up. But for answer I could only shriek, "I can't! It will break!" watching the top of my rod as it jigged up and down, very much in the fashion of Clare performing what she calls a waltz. She dances as badly as a man.

"No, it will not," he cried back bluntly. "Keep it up, and let out a little line with your fingers when he pulls hardest."

We were forced to shout and scream. The wind had risen and was adding to the noise of the water. Soon I heard him wading behind me. "Where's your landing-net?" he asked, with the most provoking coolness.

"Oh, in the pool! Somewhere about. I am sure I don't know," I answered wildly.

What he said to this I could not catch, but it sounded rude. And then he waded off to fetch, as I guessed, his own net. By the time he reached me again I was in a sad plight, feet like ice, and hands benumbed, while the wind, and rain, and hail, which had come down upon us with a sudden violence, unknown, it is to be hoped, anywhere else, were mottling my face all sorts of unbecoming colors. But the line was taut. And wet and cold went for nothing five minutes later, when the fish lay upon the bank.

"You did that very pluckily, little one," said the onlooker; "but I am afraid you will suffer for it by and by. You must be chilled through."

Quickly as I looked up at him, I only met a good-humored smile. He did not mean to be rude. And after all, when I was in such a mess it was not possible that he could see what I was like. He was wet enough himself. The rain was streaming from the brim of the soft hat which he had turned down to shelter his face, and trickling from his chin, and turning his

shabby Norfolk jacket a darker shade. As for his hands, they looked red and knuckly enough, and he had been wading almost to his waist. But he looked, I don't know why, all the stronger and manlier and nicer for these things, because, perhaps, he cared for them not one whit. What I looked like myself I dared not think. My skirts were as short as short could be, and they were soaked; most of my hair was unplaited, my gloves were split, and my sodden boots were out of shape. I was forced, too, to shiver and shake from cold, which was provoking, for I knew it made me seem half as small again.

"Thank you, I am a little cold, Mr.—Mr.—" I said, grave, only my teeth would chatter so that he laughed outright as he took me up with—

"Herapath. And to whom have I the honor of speaking?"

"I am Miss Guest," I said miserably. It was too cold to be frigid to advantage.

"Commonly called Bab, I think," the wretch answered. "The walls of our hut are not sound-proof, you see. But come, the sooner you get back to dry clothes and the stove the better, Bab. You can cross the river just below, and cut off half a mile that way."

"I can't," I said obstinately. Bab, indeed! How dared he?

"Oh, yes, you can," with intolerable good temper. "You shall take your rod and I the prey. You cannot be wetter than you are now."

He had his way, of course, since I did not foresee that at the ford he would lift me up bodily and carry me over the deeper part without a pretence of asking leave or a word of apology. It was done so quickly that I had no time to remonstrate. Still I was not going to let it pass, and when I had shaken myself straight again, I said, with all the haughtiness I could assume, "Don't you think, Mr. Herapath, that it would have been more—more—"

"Polite to carry you over, child? No, not at all. It

will be wiser and warmer for you to run down the hill. Come along!"

And without more ado, while I was still choking with rage, he seized my hands and set off at a trot, lugging me through the sloppy places much as I have seen a nurse drag a fractious child down Constitution Hill. It was not wonderful that I soon lost the little breath his speech had left me, and was powerless to complain when we reached the bridge. I could only thank heaven that there was no sign of Clare.

A wet stool-car and wetter pony were dimly visible on the bridge; to which, as we came up, a damp urchin creeping from some crevice added himself. I was pushed in as if I had no will of my own, the gentleman sprang up beside me, the boy tucked himself away somewhere behind, and the little *teste* set off at a canter, so deceived by the driver's excellent imitation of "Pss," the Norse for "Tchk," that in ten minutes we were at home.

"Well, I never!" Clare said, surveying me from a respectful distance, when at last I was safe in our room. "I would not be seen in such a state by a man for all the fish in the sea!"

And she looked so tall, and trim, and neat, that it was the more provoking. At the moment I was too miserable to answer her, and had tc find comfort in promising myself that when we were back in Bolton Gardens I would see that Fräulein kept Miss Clare's pretty nose to the grindstone though it were ever so much her last term or Jack were ever so fond of her. Papa was in the plot against me, too. What right had he to thank Mr. Herapath for bringing "his little girl" home safe? He can be pompous enough at times. I never knew a stout queen's counsel—and papa is stout—who was not, any more than a thin one who did not contradict. It is in their patents, I think. Mr. Herapath dined with us that evening—if fish and potatoes and boiled eggs, and sour bread and pancakes, and claret and coffee can be called a dinner—but nothing I could do, though I made the best of my wretched frock and was as stiff as Clare

herself, could alter his first impression. It was too bad: he had no eyes! He either could not or would not see any one but the draggled Bab—fifteen at most and a very tomboy—whom he had carried across the river. He styled Clare, who talked Baedeker to him in her primmest and most precocious way, Miss Guest, and once at least during the evening dubbed me plain Bab. I tried to freeze him with a look then, and papa gave him a taste of the pompous manner, saying coldly that I was older than I seemed. But it was not a bit of use; I could see that he set it all down to the grand airs of a spoiled child. If I had put my hair up it might have opened his eyes, but Clare teased me about it and I was too proud for that.

When I asked him if he was fond of dancing he said good-naturedly: "I don't visit very much, Miss Bab. I am generally engaged in the evening."

Here was a chance. I was going to say that that no doubt was the reason why I had never met him, when papa ruthlessly cut me short by asking, "You are not in the law?"

"No," he replied. "I am in the London Fire Brigade."

I think that we all upon the instant saw him in a helmet sitting at the door of the fire station by St. Martin's Church. Clare turned crimson and papa seemed on a sudden to call his patent to mind. The moment before I had been as angry as angry could be with our guest, but I was not going to look on and see him snubbed when he was dining with us and all. So I rushed into the gap as quickly as surprise would let me with "Good gracious, how nice! Do tell me all about a fire!"

It made matters—my matters—worse, for I could have cried with vexation when I read in his face next moment that he had looked for their astonishment; while the ungrateful fellow set down my eager remark to mere childish ignorance.

"Some time I will," he said with a quiet smile *de haut en bas;* "but I do not often attend one in person. I

am Captain ——'s private secretary, aide-de-camp, and general factotum."

And it turned out that he was the son of a certain Canon Herapath, so that papa lost sight of his patent box altogether, and they set to discussing Mr. Gladstone, while I slipped off to bed feeling as small as I ever did in my life and out of temper with everybody. It was a long time since I had been used to young men talking politics to papa, when they could talk—politics—to me.

Possibly I deserved the week of vexation which followed; but it was almost more than I could bear. He —Mr. Herapath, of course—was always about fishing or lounging outside the little white posting-house, taking walks and meals with us, and seeming heartily to enjoy papa's society. He came with us when we drove to the top of the pass to get a glimpse of the Sulethid peak; and it looked so brilliantly clear and softly beautiful as it seemed to float, just tinged with color, in a far-off atmosphere of its own beyond the dark ranges of nearer hills, that I began to think at once of the drawing-room in Bolton Gardens with a cosey fire burning and afternoon tea coming up. The tears came into my eyes, and he saw them before I could turn away from the view, and said to papa that he feared his little girl was tired as well as cold—and so spoiled all my pleasure. I looked back afterward as papa and I drove down; he was walking by Clare's carcole, and they were laughing heartily.

And that was the way always. He was such an elder brother to me—a thing I never had and do not want—that a dozen times a day I set my teeth viciously together and said to myself that if ever we met in London—but what nonsense that was, because, of course, it mattered nothing to me what he was thinking, only he had no right to be so rudely familiar. That was all; but it was quite enough to make me dislike him.

However, a sunny morning in the holidays is a cheerful thing, and when I strolled down stream with my rod on the day after our expedition, I felt I could enjoy

myself very nearly as much as I had before his coming spoiled our party. I had chosen the lower river because Mr. Herapath usually fished the upper part, and I would not be ruffled this nice day. So I was the more vexed to come suddenly upon him fishing, and fishing where he had no right to be. Papa had spoken to him about the danger of it, and he had as good as said he would not do it again. Yet there he was, thinking, I dare say, that we should not know. It was a spot where one bank rose into quite a cliff, frowning over a deep pool at the foot of some falls. Close to the cliff the water still ran with the speed of a mill-race, so fast as to endanger a good swimmer. But on the far side of this current there was a bit of slack water which was tempting enough to have set some one's wits to work to devise means to fish it, which from the top of the cliff was impossible. Just above the water was a ledge, a foot wide, perhaps, which might have done only it did not reach to this end of the cliff. However, that foolhardy person had espied this, and got over the gap by bridging the latter with a bit of plank, and then had drowned himself or gone away, in either case leaving his board to tempt others to do likewise.

And there was Mr. Herapath fishing from the ledge. It made me giddy to look at him. The rock overhung the water so much that he could not stand upright; the first person who got there must surely have learned to curl himself up from much sleeping in Norwegian beds, which were short for me. I thought of this oddly enough as I watched him, and laughed, and was for going on. But when I had walked a few yards, meaning to pass round the rear of the cliff, I began to fancy all sorts of foolish things would happen. I felt sure that I should have no more peace or pleasure if I left him there. I hesitated. Yes, I would. I would go down, and ask him to leave the place; and, of course, he would do it.

I lost no time, but ran down the slope smartly and carelessly. My way lay over loose shale mingled with large stones, and it was steep. It is wonderful how

quickly an accident happens, how swiftly a thing that cannot be undone is done, and we are left wishing—oh, so vainly—that we could put the world, and all things in it, back by a few seconds. I was checking myself near the bottom, when a big stone on which I stepped moved under me. The shale began to slip in a mass, and the stone to roll. It was all done in a moment. I stayed myself, that was easy enough, but the stone took two bounds, jumped sideways, struck the piece of board, which was only resting lightly at either end, and before I could take it all in the little bridge plunged end first into the current, which swept it out of sight in an instant.

He threw up his hands in affright, for he had turned, and we both saw it happen. He made indeed as if he would try to save it, but that was impossible; and then, while I cowered in dismay, he waved his arm to me in the direction of home—again and again. The roar of the falls drowned what he said, but I guessed his meaning. I could not help him myself, but I could fetch help. It was three miles to Breistolen, rough, rocky ones, and I doubted whether he could keep his cramped position with that noise deafening him, and the endless, whirling stream before his eyes, while I was going and coming. But there was no better way I could think of; and even as I wavered he signalled to me again imperatively. For an instant everything seemed to go round with me, but it was not the time for that yet, and I tried to collect myself and harden my heart. Up the bank I went steadily, and once at the top set off at a run homeward.

I cannot tell at all how I did it; how I passed over the uneven ground, or whether I went quickly or slowly, save by the reckoning papa made afterward. I can only remember one long, hurrying scramble; now I panted up hill, now I ran down, now I was on my face in a hole, breathless and half-stunned, and now I was up to my knees in water. I slipped and dropped down places I should at other times have shrunk from, and hurt myself so that I bore the marks for months. But

I thought nothing of these things: all my being was spent in hurrying on for his life, the clamor of every cataract I passed seeming to stop my heart's beating with very fear. So I reached Breistolen and panted over the bridge and up to the little white house lying so quiet in the afternoon sunshine, papa's stool-car even then at the door ready to take him to some favorite pool. Somehow I made him understand in broken words that Herapath was in danger, drowning already, for all I knew, and then I seized a great pole which was leaning against the porch, and climbed into the car. Papa was not slow either; he snatched a coil of rope from the luggage, and away we went, a man and boy whom he had hastily called running behind us. We had lost very little time, but so much may happen in so little time.

We were forced to leave the car a quarter of a mile from that part of the river, and walk or run the rest of the way. We all ran, even papa, as I had never known him run before. My heart sank at the groan he let escape him when I pointed out the spot. We came to it one by one, and we all looked. The ledge was empty. Jem Herapath was gone. I suppose it startled me. At any rate I could only look at the water in a dazed way, and cry quietly without much feeling that it was my doing; while the men, shouting to one another in strange, hushed voices, searched about for any sign of his fate—"Jem! Jem Herapath!" So he had written his name only yesterday in the travellers' book at the posting-house, and I had sullenly watched him from the window, and then had sneaked to the book and read it. That was yesterday, and now! Oh, Jem, to hear you say "Bab" once more!

"Bab! Why, Miss Bab, what is the matter?"

Safe and sound! Yes, there he was when I turned, safe, and strong, and cool, rod in hand, and a quiet smile in his eyes. Just as I had seen him yesterday, and thought never to see him again; and saying "Bab" exactly as of old, so that something in my throat—it may have been anger at his rudeness, but I do not think

it was—prevented my saying a word until all the others came round us, and a babel of Norse and English, and something that was neither, yet both, set in.

"But how is this?" objected my father when he could be heard; "you are quite dry, my boy!"

"Dry! Why not, sir? For goodness' sake, what is the matter?"

"The matter! Didn't you fall in, or something of the kind?" papa asked, bewildered by this new aspect of the case.

"It does not look like it, does it? Your daughter gave me a very uncomfortable start by nearly doing so."

Every one looked at him for an explanation. "How did you manage to get from the ledge?" I said feebly. Where was the mistake? I had not dreamed it.

"From the ledge? Why, by the other end to be sure, so that I had to walk back round the hill. Still I did not mind, for I was thankful that it was the plank and not you that fell in."

"I—I thought—you could not get from the ledge," I muttered. The possibility of getting off at the other end had never occurred to me, and so I had made such a simpleton of myself. It was too absurd, too ridiculous. It was no wonder that they all screamed with laughter at the fool's errand they had come upon, and stamped about and clung to one another. But when *he* laughed too—and he did until the tears came into his eyes—there was not an ache or pain in my body—and I had cut my wrist to the bone against a splinter of rock—that hurt me one-half as much. Surely *he* might have seen another side to it. But he did not; and so I managed to hide my bandaged wrist from him, and papa drove me home. There I broke down entirely, and Clare put me to bed, and petted me, and was very good to me. And when I came down next day with an ache in every part of me, he was gone.

"He asked me to tell you," said Clare, not looking up from the fly she was tying at the window, "that he thought you were the bravest girl he had ever met."

So he understood now, when others had explained it

to him. "No, Clare," I said coldly, "he did not say that exactly; he said 'the bravest little girl.'" For indeed, lying upstairs with the window open I had heard him set off on his long drive to Laerdalsören. As for papa, he was half proud and half ashamed of my foolishness, and wholly at a loss to think how I could have made the mistake.

"You've generally some common sense, my dear," he said that day at dinner, "and how in the world you could have been so ready to fancy the man was in danger, I—can—not—imagine!"

"Papa," put in Clare suddenly, "your elbow is upsetting the salt."

And as I had to move my seat just then to avoid the glare of the stove which was falling on my face, we never thought it out.

II.—HIS STORY.

I WAS not dining out much at that time, partly because my acquaintance in town was limited, and something too because I cared little for it. But these were pleasant people—the old gentleman witty and amusing, the children, lively girls, nice to look at and good to talk with. The party had too a holiday flavor about them wholesome to recall in Scotland Yard, and as I had thought, playtime over, I should see no more of them, I was proportionately pleased to find that Mr. Guest had not forgotten me, and pleased also—shrewdly expecting that we might kill our fish over again—to regard his invitation to dinner at a quarter to eight as a royal command.

But if I took it so I was sadly wanting in the royal courtesy to match. What with one delay owing to work that would admit of none, and another caused by a cabman strange to the ways of town, it was twenty-five minutes after the hour named when I reached Bolton Gardens. A stately man, so like the queen's counsel that it was plain upon whom the latter modelled himself, ushered me straight into the dining-room, where Guest greeted me very kindly, and met my excuses by

apologies on his part—for preferring, I suppose, the comfort of eleven people to mine. Then he took me down the table, and said, "My daughter," and Miss Guest shook hands with me and pointed to the chair at her left. I had still, as I unfolded my napkin, to say "Clear, if you please," and then I was free to turn and apologize to her, being a little shy, and, as I have said, a somewhat infrequent diner-out.

I think that I never saw so remarkable a likeness—to her younger sister—in my life. She might have been little Bab herself, but for her dress and some striking differences. Miss Guest could not be more than eighteen, in form almost as fairylike as the little one, with the same childlike, innocent look on her face. She had the big, gray eyes, too, that were so charming in Bab; but in her they were more soft and tender and thoughtful, and a thousand times more charming. Her hair, too, was brown and wavy; only instead of hanging loose or in a pig-tail anywhere and anyhow in a fashion I well remembered, it was coiled in a coronal on the shapely little head, that was so Greek, and in its gracious, stately, old-fashioned pose so unlike Bab's. Her dress, of some creamy, gauzy stuff, revealed the prettiest white throat in the world, and arms decked in pearls, and, so far, no more recalled my little fishing-mate than the sedate self-possession and assured dignity of this girl, as she talked to her other neighbor, suggested Bab making pancakes and chattering with the landlady's children in her strangely and wonderfully acquired Norse. It was not Bab in fact; and yet it almost might have been: an etherealized, queenly, womanly Bab, who presently turned to me—

"Have you quite settled down after your holiday?" she asked, staying the apologies I was pouring into her ear.

"I had until this evening, but the sight of your father is like a breath of fiord air. I hope your sisters are well."

"My sisters?" she murmured wonderingly, her fork half-way to her pretty mouth and her attitude one of questioning.

"Yes," I said, rather puzzled. "You know they were with your father when I had the good fortune to meet him. Miss Clare and Bab."

"Eh?" dropping her fork on the plate with a great clatter.

"Yes, Miss Guest, Miss Clare and Miss Bab."

I really began to feel uncomfortable. Her color rose, and she looked me in the face in a half-proud, half-fearful way, as if she resented the inquiry. It was a relief to me when, with some show of confusion, she at length stammered: "Oh, yes, I beg your pardon, of course they were! How very foolish of me. They are quite well, thank you," and so was silent again. But I understood now. Mr. Guest had omitted to mention my name, and she had taken me for some one else of whose holiday she knew. Meanwhile I had a chance of looking at her unchecked, and thought of Dresden china, she was so frail and pretty.

"You were nearly drowned, or something of the kind, were you not?" she asked, after an interval, during which we had both talked to others.

"Well, not precisely. Your sister fancied I was in danger, and behaved in the pluckiest manner—so bravely that I can almost feel sorry that the danger was not there to dignify her heroism."

"That was like her," she answered in a tone just a little scornful. "You must have thought her a terrible tomboy."

While she was speaking there came one of those dreadful lulls in the talk, and Mr. Guest, overhearing, cried: "Who is that you are abusing, my dear? Let us all share in the sport. If it's Clare, I think I can name one who is a far worse hoyden upon occasion."

"It is no one of whom you have ever heard, papa," she answered archly. "It is a person in whom Mr.—Mr. Herapath"—I had murmured my name as she stumbled—"and I are interested. Now tell me, did you not think so?" she murmured, graciously leaning the slightest bit toward me, and opening her eyes as they looked into mine in a way that to a man who had

spent the day in a dusty room in Great Scotland Yard was sufficiently intoxicating.

"No," I said, lowering my voice in imitation of hers. "No, Miss Guest, I did not think so at all. I thought your sister a brave little thing, rather careless, as children are apt to be, but likely to grow into a charming girl."

I wondered, marking how she bit her lip and refrained from assent, whether, impossible as it must seem to any one looking in her face, there might not be something of the shrew about my beautiful neighbor. Her tone when she spoke of her sister seemed to impart no great good-will.

"So that is your opinion?" she said, after a pause. "Do you know," with a laughing glance, "that some people think I am like her?"

"Yes?" I answered gravely. "Well, I should be able to judge, who have seen you both and yet am not an old friend. And I think you are both like and unlike. Your sister has very beautiful eyes"—she lowered hers swiftly—"and hair like yours, but her manner and style were very different. I can no more fancy Bab in your place than I can picture you, Miss Guest, as I saw her for the first time—and on many after occasions," I added, laughing as much to cover my own hardihood as at the queer little figure I had conjured up.

"Thank you, Mr. Herapath," she replied, with coldness, though she had blushed darkly to her ears. "That I think must be enough of compliments for to-night —as you are not an old friend." And she turned away, leaving me to curse my folly in saying so much, when our acquaintance was as yet in the bud and as susceptible to over-warmth as to a temperature below zero.

A moment later the ladies left us. The flush I had brought to her cheek still lingered there as she swept past me with a wondrous show of dignity in one so young. Mr. Guest came down and took her place, and we talked of the "land of berries," and our adventures there, while the rest—older friends—listened indul-

gently or struck in from time to time with their own biggest fish and deadliest flies.

I used to wonder why women like to visit dusty chambers; why they get more joy—I am fain to think they do—out of a scrambling tea up three pairs of stairs in Pump Court, than from the very same materials—and comfort withal—in their own house. I imagine it is for the same reason that the bachelor finds a singular charm in a lady's drawing-room, and there, if anywhere, sees her with a reverent mind—a charm and a subservience which I felt to the full in the Guests' drawing-room—a room rich in subdued colors and a cunning blending of luxury and comfort. Yet it depressed me. I felt alone. Mr. Guest had passed on to others, and I stood aside, the sense that I was not of these people troubling me in a manner as new as it was absurd; for I had been in the habit of rather despising "society." Miss Guest was at the piano, the centre of a circle of soft light, which showed up also a keen-faced, dark-whiskered man leaning over her with the air of one used to the position. Every one else was so fully engaged that I may have looked, as well as felt, forlorn, and meeting her eyes could have fancied she was regarding me with amusement—almost triumph. It must have been mere fancy, bred of self-consciousness, for the next moment she beckoned me to her, and said to her cavalier:

"There, Jack, Mr. Herapath is going to talk to me about Norway now, so that I don't want you any longer. Perhaps you wont mind stepping up to the school-room —Fräulein and Clare are there—and telling Clare that —that—oh, anything."

There is no piece of ill-breeding so bad to my mind as for a man who is at home in a house to flaunt his favor in the face of other guests. That young lawyer's manner as he left her, and the smile of perfect intelligence which passed between them were such a breach of good manners as would have ruffled any one. They ruffled me—yes, me, although it was no concern of mine what she called him, or how he conducted him-

self—so that I could do nothing but stand by the piano and sulk. One bear makes another, you know.

She did not speak; and I, content to watch the slender hands stealing over the keys, would not until my eyes fell upon her right wrist. She had put off her bracelets and so disclosed a scar upon it, something about which —not its newness—so startled me that I said abruptly: "That is very strange! Pray tell me how you did it?"

She looked up, saw what I meant, and stopping hastily, put on her bracelets, to all appearance so vexed by my thoughtless question, and anxious to hide the mark, that I was quick to add humbly: "I asked because your sister hurt her wrist in nearly the same place on the day when she thought I was in trouble, and the coincidence struck me."

"Yes, I remember," looking at me, I thought, with a certain suspicion, as though she were not sure that I was giving the right motive. "I did this much in the same way. By falling, I mean. Isn't it a hateful disfigurement?"

No, it was no disfigurement. Even to her, with a woman's love of conquest, it must have seemed anything but a disfigurement had she known what the quiet, awkward man at her side was thinking, who stood looking shyly at it, and found no words to contradict her, though she asked him twice, and thought him stupid enough. A great longing to kiss that soft, scarred wrist was on me—and Miss Guest had added another to the number of her slaves. I don't know now why that little scar should have so touched me any more than I then could guess why, being a commonplace person, I should fall in love at first sight and feel no surprise at my condition.

After an interval, "Are you going to the Goldmaces' dance?"

"No," I answered her humbly. "I go out so little."

"Indeed," with an odd smile not too kindly; "I wish —no, I don't—that we could say the same. We are engaged, I think"—she paused, her attention divided between myself and Boccherini's minuet, the low strains

of which she was sending through the room—"for every afternoon—this week—except Saturday. By the way, Mr. Herapath—do you remember what was the name—Bab told me you teased her with?"

"Wee, bonnie Bab," I answered absently. My thoughts had gone forward to Saturday. We are always dropping to-day's substance for the shadow of to-morrow; like the dog—a dog, was it not?—in the fable.

"Oh, yes, wee, bonnie Bab," she murmured softly. "Poor Bab!" and suddenly cut short Boccherini's music and our chat by striking a terrific discord and laughing merrily at my start of discomfiture. Every one took it as a signal to leave. They all seemed to be going to meet her again next day, or the day after that; they engaged her for dances, and made up a party for the law courts, and tossed to and fro a score of laughing catch-words that were beyond my comprehension. They all did this, except myself.

And yet I went away with something before me—that call upon Saturday afternoon. Quite unreasonably I fancied I should see her alone. And so when the day came, and I stood outside the opening door of the drawing-room and heard voices and laughter within, I was hurt and aggrieved beyond measure. There was quite a party, and a merry one, assembled, who were playing, at some game, as it seemed to me, for I caught sight of Clare whipping off an impromptu bandage from her eyes, and striving by her stiffest air to give the lie to a pair of flushed cheeks. The black-whiskered man was there, and two men of his kind, and a German governess, and a very old lady in a wheel-chair, who was called "grandmamma," and Miss Guest herself, looking, in the prettiest dress of silvery plush, to the full as bright and fair and graceful as I had been picturing her each hour since we parted.

She dropped me a stately courtesy. "Will you play the part of Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs, Mr. Herapath, while I act honest Burchell, and say 'Fudge!' or will you burn nuts and play games with

neighbor Flamborough? You will join us, won't you? Clare does not so misbehave every day, only it is such a wet afternoon and so cold and wretched, and we did not think there would be any more callers—and tea will be up in five minutes."

She did not think there would be any more callers! Something in her smile belied the words and taught me that she had thought—she had known—that there would be one more caller—one who would burn nuts and play games with her though Rome itself were afire, and Tooley Street and the Mile End Road to boot.

It was a simple game enough, and not likely, one would say, to afford much risk of that burning the fingers which gave a zest to the Vicar of Wakefield's nuts. One sat in the middle blindfolded, while the rest disguised their own or assumed each other's voices, and spoke one by one some gibe or quip at his expense. When he succeeded in naming the speaker the detected satirist put on the poke, and in his turn heard things good—if he had a conceit of himself—for his soul's health. Now this *rôle* unhappily soon fell to me, and proved a heavy one, because I was not so familiar with the others' voices as were the rest; and Miss Guest—whose faintest tones I thought to have known—had a wondrous knack of cheating me, now taking off Clare's voice, and now—after the door had been opened to admit the tea—her father's. So I failed again and again to earn my release. But when a voice behind me cried with well-feigned eagerness, "How nice! Do tell me all about a fire!" though no fresh creaking of the door had reached me nor warning been given of an addition to the players, I had not the smallest doubt who was the speaker, but exclaimed at once, "That is Bab! Now I cry you mercy. I am right this time. That was Bab!"

I looked for a burst of applause and laughter, such as had before attended a good thrust home, but none came. On the contrary, with my words so odd a silence fell upon the room that it was clear that something was wrong, and I pulled off my handkerchief in haste, repeating, "That was Bab, I am sure."

But if it was, I could not see her. What had come over them all? Jack's face wore a provoking smile, and his friends were clearly bent upon snickering. Clare looked horrified, and grandmamma gently titillated, while Miss Guest, who had risen and half turned away toward the windows, seemed to be in a state of proud confusion. What was the matter?

"I beg every one's pardon by anticipation," I said, looking round in a bewildered way; "but have I said anything wrong?"

"Oh, dear, no," cried the fellow they called Jack, with a familiarity that was in the worst taste—as if I had meant to apologize to him! "Most natural thing in the world!"

"Jack, how dare you?" exclaimed Miss Guest, stamping her foot.

"Well, it seemed all right. It sounded very natural, I am sure."

"Oh, you are unbearable! Why don't you say something, Clare?"

"Mr. Herapath, I am sure that you did not know that my name was Barbara."

"Certainly not," I cried. "What a strange thing!"

"But it is, and that is why grandmamma is looking so shocked, and Mr. Buchanan is wearing threadbare an old friend's privilege of being rude. I freely forgive you if you will make allowance for him. And you shall come off the stool of repentance and have your tea first, since you are the greatest stranger. It is a stupid game, after all!"

She would hear no apologies from me. And when I would have asked why her sister bore the same name, and thus excused myself, she was intent upon tea-making, and the few moments I could with decency add to my call gave me scant opportunity. I blush to think how I eked them out, by what subservience to Clare, by what a slavish anxiety to help even Jack to muffins—each piece I hoped might choke him. How slow I was to find hat and gloves, calling to mind with terrible vividness, as I turned my back upon the circle, that

again and again in my experience an acquaintance begun by a dinner had ended with the consequent call. And so I should have gone—it might have been so here—but that the door-handle was stiff, and Miss Guest came to my aid as I fumbled with it. "We are always at home on Saturdays, if you like to call, Mr. Herapath," she murmured carelessly, not lifting her eyes—and I found myself in the street.

So carelessly she said it, that with a sudden change of feeling I vowed I would not call. Why should I? Why should I worry myself with the sight of those other fellows parading their favor? With the babble of that society chit-chat, which I had so often scorned, and—and still scorned, and had no part or concern in. They were not people to suit me, or do me good. I would not go, I said, and repeated it firmly on Monday and Tuesday; on Wednesday only so far modified it that I thought at some distant time to leave a card—to avoid discourtesy; on Friday preferred an earlier date as wiser and more polite, and on Saturday walked shame-faced down the street and knocked and rang, and went upstairs—to taste a pleasant misery. Yes, and on the next Saturday, too, and the next, and the next; and that one on which we all went to the theatre, and that other one on which Mr. Guest kept me to dinner. Ay, and on other days that were not Saturdays, among which two stand high out of the waters of forgetfulness—high days indeed—days like twin pillars of Hercules, through which I thought to reach, as did the seamen of old, I knew not what treasures of unknown lands stretching away under the setting sun. First that one on which I found Barbara Guest alone and blurted out that I had the audacity to wish to make her my wife; and then heard, before I had well—or badly—told my tale, the wheels of grandmamma's chair outside.

"Hush!" the girl said, her face turned from me. "Hush, Mr. Herapath. You don't know me, indeed. You have seen so little of me. Please say nothing more about it. You are completely under a delusion."

"It is no delusion that I love you, Barbara!" I cried.

"It is, it is," she repeated, freeing her hand. "There. if you will not take an answer—come—come at three to-morrow. But mind, I promise you nothing—I promise nothing," she added feverishly, and fled from the room, leaving me to talk to grandmamma as best and escape as quickly as I might.

I longed for a great fire that evening, and failing one, tired myself by tramping unknown streets of the East End, striving to teach myself that any trouble to-morrow might bring was but a shadow. The effort did me good, sending me home tired out, to sleep as soundly as if I were going to be hanged next day, and not—which is a very different thing—to be put upon my trial.

"I will tell Miss Guest you are here, sir," the man said. I looked at all the little things in the room which I had come to know well—her work-basket, the music upon the piano, the table-easel, her photograph, and wondered if I were to see them no more, or if they were to become a part of my every-day life. Then I heard her come in, and turned quickly, feeling that I should learn my fate from her greeting.

"Bab!" The word was wrung from me perforce. And then we stood and looked at one another, she with a strange pride and defiance in her eyes, though her cheek was dark with blushes, and I with wonder and perplexity in mine. Wonder and perplexity that quickly grew into a conviction, a certainty that the girl standing before me in the short-skirted brown dress with tangled hair and loose neck-ribbon was the Bab I had known in Norway; and yet that the eyes—I could not mistake them now, no matter what unaccustomed look they might wear—were Barbara Guest's!

"Miss Guest—Barbara," I stammered, grappling with the truth, "why have you played this trick upon me?"

"It is Miss Guest and Barbara now," she cried, with a mocking courtesy. "Do you remember, Mr. Herapath, when it was Bab?—when you treated me as a kind of toy, and a plaything, with which you might be as inti-

mate as you liked, and hurt my feelings—yes, it is weak to confess it, I know—day by day and hour by hour?"

"But surely that is forgiven now?" I said, dazed by an attack so sudden and so bitter. "It is atonement enough that I am at your feet now, Barbara!"

"You are not," she retorted hotly. "Don't say you have offered love to me, who am the same with the child you teased at Breistolen. You have fallen in love with my fine clothes, and my pearls, and my maid's work! not with me. You have fancied the girl you saw other men make much of. But you have not loved the woman who might have prized that which Miss Guest has never learned to value."

"How old are you?" I said hoarsely.

"Nineteen!" she snapped out. And then for a moment we were both silent.

"I begin to understand now," I answered slowly, as soon as I could conquer something in my throat. "Long ago, when I hardly knew you, I hurt your woman's pride, and since that you have plotted—"

"No, you have tricked yourself!"

"And schemed to bring me to your feet that you might have the pleasure of trampling on me. Miss Guest, your triumph is complete, more complete than you are able to understand. I loved you this morning above all the world—as my own life—as every hope I had. See, I tell you this that you may have a moment's keener pleasure when I am gone."

"Don't! don't!" she cried, throwing herself into a chair and covering her face.

"You have won a man's heart and cast it aside to gratify an old pique. You may rest content now, for there is nothing wanting to your vengeance. You have given me as much pain as a woman, the vainest and the most heartless, can give a man. Good-by."

And with that I was leaving her, fighting my own pain and passion, so that the little hands she raised as though they would ward off my words were nothing to me. I felt a savage delight in seeing that I could hurt

her, which deadened my own grief. The victory was not all with her, lying there sobbing. Only where was my hat? Let me get my hat and go. Let me escape from this room wherein every trifle upon which my eye rested awoke some memory that was a pang. Let me get away, and have done with it all.

Where was the hat? I had brought it up I could not go without it. It must be under her chair by all that was unlucky, for it was nowhere else. I could not stand and wait, and so I had to go up to her, with cold words of apology upon my lips, and being close to her and seeing on her wrist, half hidden by fallen hair, the scar she had brought home from Norway, I don't know how it was that I fell on my knees by her and cried:

"Oh, Bab, I loved you so! Let us part friends."

For a moment, silence. Then she whispered, her hand in mine: "Why did you not say Bab to begin? I only told you that Miss Guest had not learned to value your love."

"And Bab?" I murmured, my brain in a whirl.

"Learned long ago, poor girl!"

And the fair, tear-stained face of my tyrant looked into mine for a moment, and then came quite naturally to its resting-place.

"Now," she said, when I was leaving, "you may have your hat, sir."

"I believe," I replied, "that you sat upon this chair on purpose."

And Bab blushed. I believe she did.

In presenting a story of Christmas in Shantytown on the high authority of Edward Harrigan, playwright and actor, we are indebted to the *Dramatic Mirror*. Copyrighted.

JIMMIE DALY'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

It was Christmas Eve in that fast-fading quarter of our city called Shantytown. The snow covered the earth, and the little old rookeries seemed to stand out from it like spots on a white blanket, while above them, on the Avenue, stood their magnificent marble-fronted companions, looking down upon their happy-go-lucky, come-day-go-day brothers.

Contentment was the good fairy that ruled over Squatterville that Christmas Eve, and the grand, frigid-faced buildings appeared as though they too felt her influence. That made the bond of sympathy which bound them and their occupants in good-fellowship to the lowly shanties and their dwellers.

All was gayety in the mansion, all was gayety in the hovels—except one, where Jimmie Daly, "the sailor's son," as he was known by the neighbors on the rocks, lay on a rude but well-covered bed, convalescing from a long siege of sickness.

The room in which our little invalid lay, the only apartment in the shanty, was warm and cosey. The fire in the old stove burned brightly, and the bricks of the chimney, that had been thrown together by an unskilled hand, were warm and comfortable, and Nannie, the goat, knew it well, for she cuddled close to them, chewing her cud, and gazing blandly at Jimmie in the bed, happy to be near her young master.

The pieces of carpet that covered the floor were of as many colors as Joseph's coat, and the furniture was in the prevailing fashion, as it was made up of odd bits. One could not tell the relationship existing between the rocker, chairs, and stool. The tablecloth that covered

the table which stood in the corner had been an emblazoned oilcloth at one time, but now its checker-board gaudiness had disappeared from the constant scrubbing given it by the working hands of the tidy woman that kept our Jimmie's home in order. By the side of the table, against the wall, stood the open cupboard. Its shelves were neatly covered with old newspapers, upon which rested the bowls, cups, and saucers of our little family. Above the cupboard, near the peak of the slant, heterogeneous roof of this humble abode, was the stovepipe hole, that had not been in use since the brick chimney was built, and, as Jimmie was getting better, his mother, following Dr. McAfee's directions, had taken out from the hole the wad of old rags, to give the room the necessary ventilation for his patient.

A silence reigned over Jimmie and his mute companion, only broken by the chiming of the church bells, calling both rich and poor to hear the words that were spoken by Him who gave us Christmas.

Suddenly a bird—a beautiful canary—flew in the pipe-hole and alighted on the front of Jimmie's bed, as his mother, the Widow Daly, entered the room. She was a black-haired Irishwoman, whose face yet bore some of its youthful comeliness, only shadowed by tell-tale lines of grief. She had an old plaid shawl wrapped about her, and she wore a hood upon her head, both mementoes of the land that gave her birth.

She carried in her hand some copies of our evening papers, as she had just come from her occupation of selling the news at the foot of the stairs at the elevated station in Harlem; and the joy of a good afternoon's work expressed itself in her face as she came in, and, while quickly closing the door behind her, said:

"Cover up, Jimmie, the drafts are bad."

The boy, who had sat up in bed on seeing the bird, now pointed to it, not daring to speak, his face suffused with joy. His mother, observing the canary, intimated to her son by gesticulation that she would trap the bird; then, quietly taking off her hood, she approached it

stealthily and, with a quick movement, covered it, exclaiming:

"I have him, Jimmie! I have him!"

The lad, now intensely interested in the proceedings, said: "Don't hurt the bird, mother, don't!" She replied, "Never fear, Jimmie!" Then, placing her hand under the hood, she withdrew the timid creature, and holding him gently, she said: "Isn't he lovely, my boy! My! my! but his feathers are like silk. Och, sure, an' where did he come from, this blessed Christmas Eve?"

Then Jimmie told how the bird flew in the pipe-hole, while the widow interpolated praises of the canary's beauty.

She said, "Hold him, Jimmie." The boy took the bird from his mother, and she continued: "I'll put him in the parrot cage that our beautiful Polly died in." Then taking a chair over she stood upon it, and took down the cage from the wall, and laid it on the table. Then taking the bird from her son, she placed it in its new quarters, speaking as she proceeded.

"The Lord is watching over ye, me darling boy, and this lovely bird has come to us, tellin' me that ye'll soon be strong and able, and ye'll grow up like your father before ye, and be a comfort to your mother's ould days." She went on in this strain until she had hung the cage upon the wall. "Can you see him from the bed, Jimmie?" said she.

"Yes, mother," answered the boy; "but come over and pull der shade up from der winder. I want to see de big house where de music's playing."

His attention had been taken from the bird by hearing the strains of a waltz coming from a piano in one of the houses on the Avenue.

"Ain't dat nice music, mother?" the boy said.

"Yes, Jimmie," the mother replied, "they play the grand piano beautiful;" then lighting a candle that stood on the table, she continued: "God bless them, a strain of music is a welcome stranger to ye, Jimmie, this Christmas Eve;" then taking a stool from the corner

where the goat lay cuddled, she said: "Ah, me lady, I owe you a larruping for ateing me two *Worlds* and a *Sun* last night. Four cents o' me profit."

The goat looked up at her, and the widow's face changed to a gentle expression as she said: "No, no, Nannie, I furgive ye! It's your sweet milk that's bringing the roses to my tender boy's cheeks." Then, shaking her head in admiration of her Nannie, she took the stool to the foot of the bed and stood upon it, and drew up the shade of the window, and fastened it.

The boy who, during the mother's actions, had been dreamily listening to the music, now looked through the window pane, exclaiming:

"Mother! mother! Look there!" his eyes now aglow with a new pleasure.

"Where?" said the widow, getting off the stool, and going to the side of the bed, where the rocker stood, and seating herself so that she might more easily look to where her son with his little, delicate, attenuated hand now indicated.

"There, mother," replied the lad. "In de big house on de Avenue where de music is. Dere's a tree in de winder, and dere's candles burning on it. Dat's funny, ain't it, mother? I never seed dat before. What do dey have dat tree dere for, mother?"

The tears came into the widow's eyes as she looked up at the window of the mansion, for she pictured the happiness there, which the toy evidenced, and the contrast of her shanty's poverty and the mansion's riches came upon her like an evil spirit whispering, "Why are they rich and why are you poor?" Then the soul of this pure woman answered:

"The Lord is good to all, both rich and poor. Let them be merry over there in the big house, and more glory to them. I'm happy, Jimmie, happy! for God didn't take ye from me. So them and me ought to be thankful this blessed Christmas Eve."

The boy's face now flushed with excitement, as he saw three prettily dressed children come to the window and begin to decorate the tree with bonbons and toys.

"Look, mother!" said Jimmie. "Ain't dem little girls dressed nice, and what are dey doin', mother?"

The widow replied: "They're decorating the tree, Jimmie."

"What is dat tree for?" asked the boy.

"It's a Christmas-tree, my darling," answered the good woman.

"Mother, I never seed a Christmas-tree in Shanty-town," said her son; "and mother," he continued, "before me fadder was drowned at sea, did he ever bring me something for Christmas?"

The widow, who had now risen from the rocker and gone to the cupboard for a cup to fill with tea that was in the kettle on the stove, kept drying her eyes with her apron, and her actions were only a pretext to hide her emotions from her son. Having poured out her cup of tea, she went to the cupboard for the sugar and milk, and while she was stirring the tea with a spoon, she said, with the tears in her voice:

"Arrah, your father was a good, sober, honest man. The Lord rest his sowl"—and as she sat in the rocker beside her boy, the barking of dogs was heard.

"Some stranger on de rocks, mother," said the boy.

"Yes, Jimmie," replied the widow, rising. "An' it's worth a stranger's life to venture into Shantytown after dark, although I wouldn't say anything agin the dogs, for they're friendly to Nannie beyant."

Suddenly the crash of a small stone falling against the outside of the shanty was heard. Then another, and another.

"It's Dr. McAfee. Three stones agin the shanty is his knock, Jimmy," said Mrs. Daly. Going to the door and opening it, she shouted:

"Out o' that! Bad luck to ye, ye ki-hi! Can't ye tell the difference between an Italian and a gintleman? Out o' that!" she repeated, as the barking ceased.

Dr. McAfee, a jolly-faced man with a beard *à la militaire*, entered quickly at Mrs. Daly's welcome of "Come in, doctor, come in!" He was followed by a somewhat older man, to whom the widow modestly

curtsied, while offering him a chair saying, "Sit down, sir, sit down. I wish ye all a merry Christmas."

"I wish you many of them," answered the gentleman.

Then the doctor looked up from the rocker, where he had sat on entering, and while holding Jimmie's pulse, said:

"Mrs. Daly, I'll send you a turkey to-morrow, and you might give Jimmie a bit of the breast, for he's able to eat now, and I haven't any doubt but he will be a strong boy in a week or more, and ye can take that good news and my bill for services for my Christmas present, as you're from the same part of Ireland with me."

The widow ejaculated, "Oh, doctor!" and she would have gone on with a profusion of thanks had not the physician checked her, saying:

"Stop! stop! I'm forgetting my manners." Then rising, he continued: "Mrs. Daly, this is Mr. Hall, the gentleman that lives over on the Avenue." Then turning toward the window, he went on: "Why, I declare, you can see his house from the shanty, and look, sir," as he drew Mr. Hall nearer the bed, and pointed to the window of the mansion, "there's little Nettie, and Katie, and Julia, decorating the Christmas-tree."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Hall, as he went back and resumed his seat, while the good doctor patted Jimmie on the head, and said, as he pointed to the Christmas-tree:

"Oh, Jimmie, there's medicine for ye beyant."

"My dear doctor," said Mr. Hall, "you are forgetting my errand here."

"Faith, I am," replied the doctor. Then addressing the widow, he continued: "Mr. Hall's little daughter Nettie is crying her eyes out for her lost pet."

"Yes," added Mr. Hall, "and I have just left a happy party at my house to go with the doctor and search for it."

"What's that?" said the physician, looking up at the parrot cage.

"It's a little canary bird dat flew in de pipe-hole before mother come home," said Jimmie.

"Why, that's my Nettie's bird," said Mr. Hall, rising.

At the doctor's exclamation the widow had taken down the cage and placed it on the table, when the little songster began to sing as if it recognized its friend; and Nannie, the goat, hearing the song, turned around to warm her other side, seemingly pleased with the melody, while Jimmie sat up in bed, joy lighting up his countenance.

"I'll take the bird home to Nettie, and when I bring back to my darling her lost pet all her other Christmas presents will lose their charm."

The tears came into Jimmie's eyes on hearing the words that Mr. Hall had spoken, and the doctor, observing them, sat down by the rocker and took the lad's hand in his own, and while gently smoothing it, said:

"What's the matter, Jimmie?"

This interrogation brought Mr. Hall and the widow to the bedside, as the boy in a sobbing voice imploringly said:

"Oh, don't take the bird away from me. He came to me himself for Christmas."

Then the widow said:

"It's the gentleman's bird, Jimmie, and we must give back that which don't belong to us." Mr. Hall and the doctor were now exchanging glances, that intimated that they were studying how and by what means they could take Nettie's pet home without leaving Jimmie unhappy. Suddenly Mr. Hall said:

"Why, bless your dear little heart, Jimmie, I'll bring you a bird that came all the way from an island in the Pacific Ocean—where no man lives!"

"Yes," added the doctor, "thousands of miles from here, and near the island where Robinson Crusoe built his hut, just like this shanty, and there he had his goat and his man Friday."

"Tell me of Robinson Crusoe, doctor," said Jimmie.

"I'll tell ye of three Robinson Crusoes, Jimmie," replied our good-natured M. D.

"Three?" said Jimmie, astounded.

"Yes, three," said the physician, "and they are now over in Mr. Hall's house spending Christmas Eve."

"An' did they come from de island far away?" asked the lad eagerly.

"Yes," replied the doctor, "and they brought birds and parrots and many things with them."

"Who are dey, doctor?" said Jimmie.

"They are shipwrecked sailors," answered the doctor.

The widow, who had been standing at the foot of the bed watching her boy, said: "May the Lord watch over the ships, I say. Gentlemen, my Jimmie's father, my Tom, was a sailor, but now he lies buried at the bottom of the sea these long nine years."

"And were you living here when your husband sailed his last voyage?" asked Mr. Hall.

"No, sir; when I came out from Ireland in the steerage of a big sailing ship, sir, we sailed into Boston harbor, and it was on the ship that I met Tom, sir, and we dearly loved each other, and we were married in Boston ten years ago. Jimmie is nine now, and his father sailed away but a little while after he was born. Yes, sir, sailed away for the last time in a ship called the *Blue Wing*."

"The *Blue Wing!*" almost shouted Mr. Hall.

"Yes, sir, the *Blue Wing*," answered the widow.

"My good woman, I owned that ship, and if I mistake not, I can bring somebody safe into port. Yes," continued Mr. Hall, as he took up the parrot cage from the table, "I'll bring you a Christmas present that my Nettie's pet guided me to find. Wait for me, doctor," he exclaimed, as he bounded out of the shanty with the cage, while the widow and physician looked after him utterly surprised.

"The old gentleman's running," said the widow, "wid never a fear of the dogs"—whose barking was now renewed, but soon stopped by Mrs. Daly's admonitions, such as "Lay down, Danny!" "Whist, Napoleon!" "Out o' that, ye mongrels!" and the final exclamation, "Come in, doctor, the drafts o' the door is on Jimmie." The boy, who had been watching what

was going on with bewilderment, inquired: "What's the matter, mother?"

The widow replied: "I don't know, Jimmie; maybe the doctor could tell us."

"Oh," said that worthy man, "there is good news of some kind for you. Mr. Hall is a wealthy shipowner, and I made a call at his house to-night. One of his servants is ill, and while there I met some shipwrecked sailors of one of his lost vessels. They were picked up from an island in the Pacific Ocean and brought to New York, and the strangest part of the story is—they found gold on the island where they were cast away, and each man has plenty of it."

Jimmie, whose childish curiosity was now thoroughly aroused, asked the doctor question upon question about ships and sailors, and the good man and the widow answered the boy's interrogations to his intense gratification, and so the time passed until the dogs were heard to bark again.

"Mr. Hall is coming back," said the widow. At that moment there was a shout heard without.

"Mary Daly, ahoy!"

At the sound of the voice the widow said: "That's my Tom's voice. Jimmie, Jimmie, your father's coming."

The poor woman would have fallen where she stood had not the doctor caught her in his arms, as Mr. Hall entered, and three rugged-looking sailors after him.

"Mary!" fairly screamed the first sailor.

"Tom!" answered the widow, as she fell into her husband's arms.

And so Jimmie Daly's Christmas present came home to him.

To those who have been honored by the friendship of dogs, the following story, by W. E. Norris, is commended.

THE DUFFER.

"WHAT on earth made you call the poor brute such a name as that?" asked Mr. Belton, looking down with a certain contemptuous pity at the nondescript animal who was imprinting dirty paw-marks upon his new box-cloth gaiters.

"Well, reely, sir," answered Mr. Markham, the horse-dealer, "I don't 'ardly see what else you *could* call him. Strayed 'ere last winter when he was on'y a pup and, as nobody claimed him, I kep' him, thinkin' he might turn out to be some good for somethin'. But I'm blessed if *I* can discover what the Lord created him for! Won't fight, won't kill a rat, won't earn his keep in no sort o' way. So we called him the Duffer, and he answered as nat'ral as I should if you was to sing out 'Joe Markham!' Give a dog a bad name and 'ang him, they say. Well, I've give him his name, and now I s'pose I shall have to do the rest; for I can't afford to pay seven and six a year for the likes of him in these 'ard times."

"He doesn't look a well-bred one," observed Mr. Belton.

"Oh, he's a cur, sir; no need to tell *you* that. Got a bit of the bull in him, as you see; but what the rest of him is I couldn't say, not if you was to put me on my hoath. Good-natured creatur', too; it goes agin' me to put him out o' the way. Seems to have took to you wonderful, sir. Cur'ous, ain't it, how dogs always know a gentleman as understands 'em?"

That very smart young gentleman, Dick Belton, thought he understood a good deal about dogs. He also thought that he understood a good deal about horses, and was under the impression that he had just purchased a valuable hunter, at a great bargain, from Mr. Markham.

Whether this confidence in his knowledge and capacity rested upon any solid foundation may be open to doubt; but at any rate it sufficed to put him in a good humor, and he said, "Oh, I'll give the poor beggar a home if you like. One more dog among so many won't make much difference."

Thus it came to pass that, the same evening, smart Mr. Belton's smart groom was requested to take charge of an animal, among whose advantages (if he had any) smartness could hardly be reckoned.

"Well, you're a queer-looking customer, and no mistake!" the groom observed, eying the new-comer with extreme disfavor. "What particular species do *you* set up to belong to, I should like to know?"

The Duffer put his head on one side, cocked his right ear, and wagged his tail dubiously. He did not set up to belong to any recognized species, and indeed it would have puzzled the most expert judge to classify him. Viewed from a certain distance, he might, with his heavy shoulders, light hind-quarters, and shambling gait, have passed for a bull-dog; but closer inspection would have denied him all claim to belong to that noble breed. His rough, white coat, his stumpy tail, his deplorable flopping ears, and numerous other defects, upon which it would be ungracious to dwell, stamped him as a hopeless mongrel. There was something of the terrier in him; something of the lurcher; probably also a little of the sheep-dog. His lower jaw, it is true, looked like business; but unhappily a very short acquaintance with him sufficed to show that he lacked the bull-dog's first and essential characteristic, courage. All the dogs in the stable-yard made inspection of him; and it is lamentable to be obliged to add that each and all of them forced him without any difficulty to accept a licking. Even a little toy black-and-tan terrier strutted round him on tip-toe, snorted doubtfully, and then decided to go for him. "Wah! wah!" squealed the Duffer, as he fled ignominiously into a corner with his tail between his legs.

After that, it was absurd to think of changing his

name. As his former owner had said, what else could you call him?

Yet a friendly feeling for him soon sprang up among dogs and men alike. It was impossible to respect him; but it was almost equally impossible to help liking a creature so amiable, so forgiving, and so confiding. If there was a member of the establishment who did dislike him, it was the master of the establishment himself; and this, it must be confessed, was the Duffer's own fault. Slavish, passionate, demonstrative love is, alas! never appreciated by its object in this perverse world, and such an affection it was that the poor Duffer had conceived for Dick Belton. Now, Mr. Belton, who was at this time residing in a hunting-box in the shires, which he had taken for the winter months, and who was in the habit of inviting fellow-sportsmen to dine with him pretty frequently, was, like many other young men, averse to being chaffed. He had to stand a good deal of chaff about this ridiculous dog. The Duffer refused to leave him, did not resent being kicked out of the room, insisted upon sleeping at his bedroom door, and, when he was out hunting, howled without intermission until his return. Dick Belton was a good-humored fellow; but of course he was annoyed by a method of treatment which has been found annoying by all human beings from the beginning of time. However, he submitted to it more or less uncomplainingly for a good many weeks, and doubtless his patience would have held out even longer, but for a most vexatious incident which occurred at the very end of the season.

In all the world, perhaps, there was nobody for whom Dick entertained feelings of deeper veneration and esteem than he did for Sir Brooke Scatterfield, the M. F. H.; so that he was naturally much honored and flattered when Sir Brooke trotted over on an off-day to call upon him. This hale and well-preserved old gentleman, who was somewhat terrible when exercising his official functions, knew how to unbend in private; and on this occasion, after inspecting Mr. Belton's hunters, he was pleased to unbend so far as to slap his friend on

the back, calling him a devilish lucky fellow to be able to mount himself so well. Now, who could ever have supposed that this kindly and condescending act was liable to misconstruction? Who could have guessed that that idiotic dog would take it for a demonstration of hostility? Yet some such idea must, no doubt, have suggested itself to the foolish Duffer, who, without uttering a sound, promptly pinned the M. F. H. by the leg.

It was no easy matter to choke him off; but this was finally accomplished by Dick's strong fingers, and as, by the mercy of Heaven, the old gentleman was wearing leather gaiters, the damage done was comparatively trifling. Nevertheless, it was a very disagreeable thing to have happened, and Sir Brooke was not quite as pleasant about it as he might have been. He said:

"Oh, never mind; only, if I were you, Belton, I wouldn't keep those beastly curs about the place. They aren't any use, you know, and you never can trust them."

That observation decided the Duffer's fate. He received a tremendous thrashing, to which he submitted without a whimper—he who would yell if a lap-dog snapped at him—and on the following day he was driven over in a dog-cart to the abode of his late proprietor.

"Here, Markham!" called out Mr. Belton, "I've brought that brute of yours back to you; he's too great a fool for anything. I'll give you a couple of sovereigns for his keep and his license, but I can't stand him following me about any longer."

Joe Markham accepted the dog and the sovereigns, and Dick drove away—not, indeed, without some inward pangs of compunction, yet feeling that, upon the whole, he had behaved handsomely in the matter. Many a man would have been content to relieve himself of further responsibility by the simple but effective means of a charge of shot.

"Duffer come 'ome late larst night, sir," remarked his groom, when he sauntered into the stable-yard next morning. "'Ad a bit o' cord round his neck—which I expect he'd gnawed it through, sir."

And there, sure enough, crouched behind the door,

was the culprit, feebly agitating a penitent tail and bringing two pleading, deprecating eyes to bear upon the object of his adoration. The poor thing's eyes were not soft and eloquent, as the eyes of some dogs are; they were only two little round black beads, with ugly pink rims. Yet there was a look in them which, quite against Dick Belton's will, found its way to his heart.

"Oh, you abominable, useless, hideous beast!" he exclaimed, breaking into a vexed laugh; "I suppose you will stick to me now until one or other of us dies."

That such was the Duffer's fixed purpose seemed to be beyond question, and that he was able to give effect to it is perhaps not more surprising than other triumphs of unrequited love which have come under one's notice from time to time. He was a nuisance, of course; but Dick ended by accepting him as he accepted shaving every morning, answering letters, dining with wearisome people, and other inevitable nuisances, about which there is no use in grumbling.

When Dick moved up to London for the season, the Duffer accompanied him and shared his rooms in St. James's. The other dogs went, as usual, to the stables; but this audacious mongrel refused to be contented with accommodation which was considered good enough for his betters, and, like all dogs and men who persistently assert themselves, he carried his point. Life is too short and too much occupied for struggles against obstinacy, and although one may not altogether enjoy being followed into the park by an animal who makes everybody laugh, one becomes accustomed to that, just as one becomes accustomed to being called "old chap" by men whom, from choice, one would rather not know. Before the month of July, the Duffer had made many friends by his general affability, and had done nothing to earn another such enemy as Sir Brooke Scatterfield. So long as he was allowed to go everywhere with his beloved master he was satisfied; and that source of satisfaction was not denied to him, because Dick soon grew tired of kicking him in the ribs and ordering him home.

At some point or other, however, the line must needs be drawn, and Dick drew it at taking this four-footed adorer of his out of the United Kingdom. It was toward the end of the season, when everybody was leaving London, that he received a pressing invitation from a friend to proceed to the Pyrenees and join in a shooting expedition on the infrequented southern slopes of that range. Dick, who was an ardent sportsman, and whose ambition was excited by the hopes held out to him of a shot at a bouquetin, readily agreed to this proposition, and at once made preparations for a start.

"Just keep your eye on the Duffer, will you?" he said to his groom at the last moment; "and you may as well chain him up for the rest of the day. He's sure to try to get on my track, and I don't want the poor devil to be lost. Though, as far as that goes, I don't suppose any dog-stealer would look at him."

He went away without bidding any formal adieu to one who had of late become his inseparable companion. Saying good-by is always a painful process, either to him who says it or to him to whom it is said. Pleasant it can never be; so that those who omit the ceremony altogther may perhaps be credited with kindly intentions.

Dick Belton, as he settled himself comfortably in a smoking-carriage of the express which was to take him to Dover, gave a great sigh of relief. He was young and rich, and had many friends, which is as much as to say that he was not very sorry to escape from some of them for a month or two. With some modest self-approval, and with due thankfulness for mercies vouchsafed to him, he reflected that he had got through a London season without compromising himself in any way; and in mentally running through a list of those from whose society he was glad to be temporarily emancipated, he did not forget the most devoted and pertinacious of them.

"Thank heaven," he soliloquized, "I shan't see that beggar's ugly mug the first thing when I wake in the morning for some time to come! Perhaps, if I have any luck, he may die or decamp before I get back again."

"Dog-ticket, please, sir?" said the guard interrogatively when the train reached the Dover station.

"Haven't got a dog with me," answered Dick.

"Beg pardon, sir; under the seat, I think. I see him jump in while you was buying a paper at Victoria, sir. P'raps you didn't know as he'd followed you, sir," added the man, willing to make things pleasant for a defaulter who looked as though half-crowns were of no great importance to him.

Dick glanced hastily under his legs, and made use of an expression which is legally punishable by a fine of five shillings.

"Well, upon my word and honor," he ejaculated, "if this is not enough to make an archbishop curse and swear, I don't know what is!"

How the Duffer had made his way to the Victoria station and had taken his place in the train was never explained. There, however, he was, apologetic and submissive, yet firm; and there seemed to be nothing for it but to pay his fare to Paris. Afterward, Dick was sorry that he had not sent him back to London, which, of course, might quite well have been done; but for the moment he was too utterly taken aback to adopt that obvious course. So true is it that the surest method of obtaining your own way is to take it.

As the Duffer had obtained his own way, it was only in accordance with justice that he should suffer a little for it; and in truth he suffered a good deal between Calais and Argelès, at which latter place he and his master took leave of railways. In French trains the accommodation for dogs leaves much to be desired; in addition to which he spent the whole journey in a state of deep mental distress, having no reason to feel sure that his master was performing it too.

He was, therefore, all the more overjoyed when Dick came to set him free from his narrow, dark prison, and even condescended to throw him a compassionate word or two. It did not take a great deal to make the Duffer happy. So long as he was permitted to attach himself, night and day, to a man who at best treated him with

disdainful toleration, he was perfectly satisfied, and asked for nothing more. Had he been more exacting, he would no doubt have been thoroughly disgusted with the life which he now found himself called upon to lead, and which, indeed, was in no way suited to a dog of his build and habits. To trot behind the carriage up the high road to Gavarnie was all very well—a little tiring, still useful in the way of wearing down the claws and removing superfluous flesh from the ribs. But to cross slippery glaciers, to flounder in freshly fallen snow, to skirt the face of rocky precipices, where even a cat might have hesitated to venture herself—these were experiences of a very different kind; and that the Duffer faced them with no other protest than an occasional subdued whimper showed that somewhere or other about him there must lurk a vein of unsuspected courage.

"Come on, you idiot!" his master would call out to him if he displayed any inclination to shirk a difficulty. "You chose to join this expedition uninvited, and now you must take the rough with the smooth, unless you want to be left behind."

Probably the Duffer quite understood that, and he may also have been aware that it had been in contemplation to leave him for a few weeks with the landlord of the little inn at Gavarnie. The first thing that Dick Belton heard, on reaching that high mountain village, was that three days previously his friend had been suddenly summoned to England, but that he hoped to return to the Pyrenees as soon as possible. Meanwhile he was begged to start at once in quest of game, and was assured that the guide who was awaiting his arrival might be relied upon to show him sport. This guide, a grim, taciturn personage, Jacques Cazaril by name, began by objecting strongly to monsieur's "bouledogue." He said it would be almost impossible to get such a clumsily made creature over the high passes which they would have to cross, and that even if that feat should be accomplished, his presence would probably be fatal to any chance that they might have of getting a shot at an isard or a bouquetin. By far the best plan would be to let him

remain where he was, and where monsieur would find him safe and sound on his return.

This advice, which seemed sensible, might have been acted upon if Cazaril's employer had been in a good humor; but Dick Belton, who was something of a spoilt boy, had been put out—in the first place by his friend's involuntary desertion of him, and, in the second, by certain criticisms in which the guide had seen fit to indulge with respect to his rifles and ammunition. He therefore replied curtly that he meant to take the dog with him.

Eventually a compromise was arrived at. In order to approach the haunts of the rarely seen bouquetin it was necessary to camp out in one or other of the lonely valleys on the Spanish side of the mountains, and Dick agreed that during the daytime the Duffer should be left in charge of the porter, who formed the only other member of the small party, and who remained at the place of encampment while the sportsmen scaled the neighboring heights. Those were sad days for the Duffer, and not entirely pleasant ones for the porter. A dog who howls from morning to night is certainly a most exasperating companion, and when no amount of blandishments will avail to reduce him to silence, it is perhaps almost pardonable to try whether a kick with a heavy boot will prove more effectual.

It did not prove more effectual—as a matter of fact, it never does—but the Duffer was one of those strangely constituted beings who seem incapable of bearing malice, and who are, therefore (justly, it may be), despised by the rest of creation. The porter gave up kicking him after a time, and did not repulse the friendly advances which he made after nightfall; while Dick was absent the Duffer was miserable and obeyed the voice of Nature by raising his own; when Dick reappeared the Duffer was happy again, and Nature prompted him to display good-will to all around him.

Considerably less benevolence was manifested by his master, who was not happy, owing to his failure to come across any trace of a bouquetin. A fair number of

isards he did succeed in bringing down; but then he had not come all the way from England for the sake of shooting isards, and he was inclined to be dissatisfied with the phlegmatic Cazaril, who merely shrugged his shoulders, remarking that it was no fault of his if bouquetins were not as common as sheep. And when, after various changes of quarters, the party arrived at the baths of Panticosa, this rather cross-grained guide was greatly displeased to hear that his employer had secured the services of two villanous-looking Spaniards, who professed to know of a district in which the evasive quarry was pretty sure to be encountered.

"They hunt a bouquetin!" he exclaimed scornfully; "why, they don't so much as know what a bouquetin is! What they would like to do would be to entice us into some out-of-the-way spot and cut our throats."

"Two can play that game," Mr. Belton observed, "and if they attempt anything of the kind, three of us will play it. You and I and the porter ought to be able to give a tolerably good account of those half-starved wretches, I should think. However, if you are afraid, by all means say so; I have no doubt that I can replace you."

To a suggestion so worded only one reply could be made, and Cazaril made it sullenly enough. He knew very well that, if it came to a stand-up fight, the Spaniards could have no sort of chance; but he was equally well aware that they would never risk such a thing, and he was certain that robbery was their object. "You and I," he said privately to the porter, "must take it in turns to keep watch every night. Once let these scoundrels catch the three of us asleep, and we shall be three dead men, you may be sure."

To be proved wrong is never agreeable; but what is much worse is to appear to be wrong when you are really right all the time. This was the mortifying fate of Cazaril, who could not find it in his heart to rejoice when, two days after the guidance of the Spaniards had been forced upon him, Dick Belton shot a bouquetin. To any one conversant with such matters it was manifest

that this piece of luck was in no way due to their knowledge of sport or locality, for their ignorance of both had been exhibited half a dozen times in as many hours; but of course there was no use in saying that to the triumphant Englishman, and Cazaril was fain to content himself with the eloquence of silence.

If Cazaril's nose was out of joint, that did not interfere with its snoring powers, which were at all times remarkable, and which might have kept his employer awake had the latter been less pleasantly weary. As it was, Dick stretched himself out luxuriously upon the hard ground, with his feet toward the bivouac fire, and was soon wrapped in a slumber more sweet and deep than any that those who slept in beds can ever hope to enjoy. He was aroused from it by a terrific yell, followed by a sound of flying footsteps; and then, before he had half collected his wits, he found himself fighting for his life.

By mere force of instinct he grasped his rifle and, clubbing it, struck down one of the Spaniards who had sprung upon him, while at the same instant the long knife of the other was plunged sideways into the muscles of his back, inflicting a wound which he scarcely felt. In point of physique he was more than a match for his assailant; but the latter was wiry, active, and had a knife. The rapidity of his movements bewildered Dick, who was still half asleep, and who was again stabbed in the arm, while a blow which he aimed at the would-be assassin spent itself in the air and very nearly landed him upon his face. At his feet lay Cazaril, gagged and bound; the porter, who had taken to his heels, was already far away; and it is by no means certain that Mr. Belton would ever have seen his native land again if at this juncture an invaluable ally had not come to his assistance.

The Duffer, like Cazaril, was a heavy sleeper; unlike Cazaril, he had the misplaced confidence which all bull-headed dogs have in the integrity of the human race. Probably, therefore, he did not suspect foul play until he saw his master struck; but as soon as the true nature of the situation dawned upon him he threw himself

unhesitatingly into the fray. With one bound he landed upon the Spaniard's chest, and the next instant he had the fellow hard and fast by the throat. What followed can hardly be called a struggle, inasmuch as victory from the outset was assured for the right side, and, of course, it is easy enough to fell a half-throttled man. Yet even the easiest of victories is not to be won without bloodshed, and although Dick Belton could not accuse himself of having acted with any lack of promptitude, he had to see the Spaniard's knife plunged again and again into his faithful servant's body before all resistance collapsed. When he was kneeling upon the prostrate body of the foe he said, "All right, Duffer, old man; you can let him go now." But the Duffer still held on.

There is but one way of making a bull-dog relax his grip, and this Dick was forced, somewhat against his will, to employ; because, however much a miscreant may deserve death, it is always a little embarrassing to have his dead body upon your hands. But the Duffer, poor fellow, did not require a great deal of choking, and perhaps it was not the pressure of his master's knuckles that caused him to give a long sigh and roll over upon his side on the grass. For some minutes Dick could pay no attention to him. He himself had lost a good deal of blood and was beginning to feel faint; also he had to cut the cord by which Cazaril's arms were bound and utilize it to secure his prisoner. But when that was accomplished, and when a hasty examination had been made of his wounds, and the craven porter had been duly anathematized, he remembered to whom it was due that he had escaped more or less unharmed from a very ticklish emergency.

"Upon my word," he exclaimed, "that cur of mine has more stuff in him than any one would have supposed! He's as ugly as sin and the biggest fool out; but I'll be hanged if I'll ever be ashamed of him again!"

Well, there was no danger of his being tempted to display such shabbiness and ingratitude. To live admired and envied is denied to all curs and to the major-

ity of men; but to die nobly is a privilege which sometimes falls to the lot of the most humble and despised. The Duffer probably did not want to die—what creature that breathes does want to die?—but he accepted his fate without cry or complaint, which is more than can be said for most of us.

After glancing at him, Dick hastily snatched up a piece of burning wood from the fire. The red light fell upon the dog's glazing eyes and upon the pool of blood in which he was lying; he was still alive, but there was no need to possess Mr. Belton's veterinary knowledge in order to see that nothing could be done for him. With a sorrowful ejaculation, Dick dropped upon his knees beside him and kissed his head. It was the first time since the Duffer had come into his possession that he had done such a thing, and it may be hoped that this somewhat tardy token of affection soothed the last moments of its recipient, who wagged his stump of a tail feebly, and almost immediately afterward expired.

"It is fortunate," observed the aggrieved and sententious Cazaril, "that things are no worse. Another time, perhaps, monsieur will not be so ready to trust a couple of thieves. It is not for the sake of praising myself that I say it; but from the first moment I saw that they knew no more about game than that rascally porter, whose head it will be my duty to break when I catch him."

"Oh, you were right, and I was wrong," returned Dick impatiently; "you are welcome to that admission, if it will make you any happier."

Cazaril nodded. "We may call ourselves fortunate," he repeated. "Monsieur might very well have lost his life to-night; as it is, he has only lost a little blood and an animal who was worth nothing at all."

Greater love than this has no man showed than that he lay down his life for his friend is the text of this story, which was written for the *Argonaut* by Frank B. Millard.

ON BRIGHT ANGEL TRAIL.

In their weary journey across the barren mesa the travellers had suddenly come to a halt. What they had dreaded from the time they had left the stage-road station and set out on the trail had come to pass and they were sore distressed. Bad water and the insufferable heat of the desert had stretched Big Bunster out on his blankets, and he was talking about his mother and asking the others to break the news to her gently.

Bunster had not felt well when they left Flagstaff, but, like the well-meaning young idiot that he was, he persisted in facing the dangers of the trail with the others. So, as he grew less steady on his burro and the fever took a firmer hold upon his big, lazy body, his head dropped lower over the pommel, and Jim Yost, the guide and the only man of the whole six of them who really knew what danger the big fellow was in, determined to call a halt.

"I don't want to see him die in his saddle," Jim said in a whisper to Zach Rawlins, "and unless we kin git him inter more comfortable shape, he'll croak afore sundown."

So they paused in the shade of a mass of rocks, piled up in the fashion the Titans had of doing things in the days when the Grand Cañon of the Colorado was young. And they were mighty glad to rest there, for to be stared out of countenance all day long by such a sun as only the great desert knows, is enough to drive a man a long way toward a shady spot.

Big Bunster felt easier, but he knew he would die, he said, unless he could get a sip of decent water. He saw clearly enough that that was impossible, and so, in his lazy way, he was letting go of the strings of life.

"Don't wait for me to die, boys," he said; "keep along on your way, or you will all drop down as I have done. I always was rather slow, and I want to take my own time dying. Don't stop for me." Then he looked up into Zach Rawlins' face and smiled one of the queerest, ghastliest smiles Zach had ever seen. And then Zach, who was the best and truest friend Big Bunster had ever had, stuck his heels in the sand, and said it was a beastly shame that such a good fellow should come to such an end. He wanted to know why their miserable guide had led them so far out of the way, why they were here, forty miles from nowhere, and why the guide had promised to find a spring when he had known nothing of its existence, and why, in the name of all that was holy, something could not be done.

"Wal, yer needn't git so cursed riled," rasped out the grim Yost. "Nuthin' kin be did now. We can't go nc further, or your man'll drop dead as that snake-skin thar. As it is, he stands some show. We'll strike Bright Angel Trail afore dusk, when it gits cooler. It's right over thar;" and the rugged Yost pointed a knotty forefinger across a white expanse, over which lines of heat were quivering as if the very air writhed under the pitiless fire from on high.

"What good will it do Bunster, if we do get there?" whispered some one.

"Good?" returned the guide; "why, ther's water four mile from that air trail—ef we kin git down to it."

"Get down to it! Of course we will," spoke up Rawlins. "Cheer up, old man," he said soothingly, to the parched Bunster, whose tongue was out and whose eyes were staring across the plain toward Bright Angel Trail; "there's water over there, and you shall have a good drink, my boy."

"Water—yes, I see it; it's sort of gray-blue, isn't it? Why, there's a great lake; what a sight!" and the thirst-plagued man stared at the picture his distorted vision had conjured up; and, drawing in his tongue, he pressed his cracked lips together, as if gluing them to the brim of a glass full of the sparkling liquid, for which

he would have given anything he possessed for one soul-satisfying swallow. His torture, and that of the friend who watched over him while he lay tossing on his blankets, was allayed to a degree a few hours later, when the fierce sun repented and the night stole on slowly. As the evening air fanned his brow, Rawlins, riding by the side of his sick friend, made light of the day's mishaps and even managed a joke about Big Bunster's burro being smaller than its rider, which joke seemed very near the truth, though it lacked heartiness.

The little caravan made its way to Bright Angel Trail and along it to one of the outer walls of the great cañon, where it halted for the night.

Very early in the morning, before the sun had ceased his repentance, two of the men slung their canteens to their sides and started for the river; though Yost, after they had gone, said· "It's even chances 'bout them gittin' water; they mought and they moughtn't. Them air cañon walls is mighty steep, but thar may be a place to git down som'ers along thar."

Clearly the sun had determined to be as wicked as ever; and when his scorching, blistering rays reached the little camp on Bright Angel Trail, the men soon sought the shelter of the rocks. Rawlins made Bunster as comfortable as was possible; but there was very little comfort to be enjoyed. The sick man wailed for water, and his purple face was an ugly sight for his friend to gaze upon, while he vigorously fanned with his hat the dry, hot air above his brow.

Hours passed. "Will they never come?" thought Rawlins; "why did I not go myself? It was because I thought he might die while I was gone, and I wanted to stick by him to the end. Still, I should have gone—I should have gone."

Another hour dragged its reluctant way along. It was nearly noon. There they were at last—the water-bearers. But why walked they so slowly? No doubt they were tired. Yes, they were tired and worn—nearly exhausted, in fact; their clothes were in tatters, and they were shamefaced and cowed—for they brought back

no water. They had started from the walled-in stream with full canteens; but the ascent of the cañon-side had been so toilsome, the heat so intense, and their thirst so great, that they had drunk every drop.

Ugly glances shot from Zach Rawlins' eyes at the recreant ones. His blood was up. He would go down to the stream, though it were guarded by fiery dragons, and he would bring back a canteen full of water and steep the heartless ones in their shame. Yes, Big Bunster should have the all-needful draught, if he had to go through fire to get it. And he did go through fire; for it proved useless for Yost to tell him that a journey down to the water's edge in the cool of the morning and one made at mid-day were two very different things to undertake. He jerked the canteen-strap over his shoulder and strode quickly away over the baked mesa, under the burning sun, and soon began the descent. From one great step of the rough, natural stairway to another he went, and at last he gained a point where he could look off and down into the cañon's dark depths. Like a sinuous piece of steel, the river ran its way far below him, a strip of it visible here, another there, and still another beyond, so that it seemed as if the stream burrowed through high, rocky barriers. Rawlins paused not to note the brilliant patches of color along the face of the great escarpment, and the sharply sketched *chiaroscuro* that marked the naked grandeur of the scene made no impress. He only saw, running swiftly at the base of the great walls which hemmed it in from human hand, the water for which the friend of his youth lay dying. The way down was difficult. He was almost stifled by the heat; he was tortured by an intolerable thirst; his clothing was torn by jagged rocks; he was struck at by rattlesnakes, and, as if all this were not enough, one of the soles of his boots had become so warped by the heat and so split by the rocks as to make his step unsafe.

In a fever of excitement, he finally reached the river's edge. He threw himself down by the brink and eagerly gulped the sparkling water. Then he filled the canteen

and darted up the rocks. Fleet as had been his descent to the base of the cañon wall, it had taken him nearly two hours to make it. It had been hard enough coming down, but now came the real work. So steep was the rocky escarpment that its ascent was one of great effort and peril, even for a strong man at early dawn, but for a weak man, at two in the afternoon, it was a fearful task.

How intensely hot it was there on the cañon-side! How scorchingly, unbearably hot! And yet he bore it. Though his whole body reeked with perspiration and his muscles were tightly drawn under the great strain, yet he paused only to pick his way among the rocks. He could not go up the way he had come down, for it was too steep.

Within an hour the demon Thirst had seized upon him again, clutching with fiery fingers at his throat until it seemed almost closed. So quickly were the bodily juices licked up by the sun, under such tremendous effort, that his very marrow seemed to have lost its fluid portion and his tongue to have turned to a chip. Now he was in the shadow of a great rock. How grateful was the shade! He paused there for a moment. He scolded himself for his loss of time, but he felt that that moment was one spent in heaven.

In passing through a great split in a rock, the canteen-strap was cut, and down fell the precious vessel, with its still more precious contents. The stopper flew from its place and a plash of water steamed up from the burning rock on which it fell. Madly he jerked up the canteen. Thank God, only a little water had been wasted, and yet, he reflected, as he replaced the cork, he would have given worlds to have sipped what had fallen. But he hastened on. The warped and split boot-sole finally cracked clean through, and he could feel the gridiron heat of the rocks upon his naked flesh, for his stocking was quickly worn away.

It was now so hot that the rattlesnakes did not venture forth upon the rocks, so there was no longer any danger from them. The real danger now, as he viewed it, was

that he would be able but a short time longer to keep the neck of the canteen from his lips. The water had become warm, and yet it was his one source of revivification to place the flat side of the canteen against his sun-scorched face. This was at once a delight and a torture, for while the can cooled his flesh, the delicious huggle-guggle of the water nearly drove him mad. Thrice he stopped, uncorked the canteen and raised it to his lips, and then, pushing it from him by a mighty effort, he dashed wildly on. Soon he came to a place where the ascent was almost perpendicular, and where the heat was so stifling as almost to close his nostrils. The way up was lined with cactus-scrubs, whose spines pierced his hands like red-hot needles when he grasped at something by which to haul himself up. The little lizards that darted into the patches of shade seemed to mock him, and his wistful gaze could be torn from the canteen only when it was absolutely necessary for him to see his way clear.

"What is his thirst to mine?" he moaned, as for a fourth time he uncorked the canteen. "He is lying in the shade, and his brow is fanned by kindly hands, while I—I am burning."

Then the swollen, purple face of Bunster rose up before him, and he shoved the cork into the mouth of the canteen with a spasmodic effort that seemed almost superhuman. Again he toiled on—slowly now, for his strength seemed almost spent.

. . . . . .

It was dreary waiting up at the camp for the return of the water-bearer. Yost gazed for hours over the white ground in the direction of the cañon, and, at last, he grimly gave up Zach Rawlins as a lost man, though he did not say so to his less experienced friends of the camp.

"No chance fer 'em when their feet slip on the rocks over them air cliffs or when a rattlesnake nips 'em 'bove the boot-top. He's gone fer sartin," muttered the guide. "We'll have to bury the big 'un afore nightfall—fer he's most gone—an' then put back fer

the stage-station afore we all drop. It's just hell—this desert life, an' I've 'bout got my fill on it."

Then the ghost of a man, with tatters of clothing hanging from his form, darted into view around the rocks. Yost cursed the on-comer for a fool for running so hard under the burning sun. His legs seemed very unsteady, for he reeled as he ran. It was fully a minute before the guide or any of them could realize that the advancing form was that of Rawlins, and in that minute the scare-crow figure had reached the couch where Big Bunster lay, and, uncorking the canteen, had shoved the neck of it into the nearly unconscious man's mouth.

"Drink, old man! It's water—good, pure water! Drink hearty, and God bless you!" came in thin, sepulchral tones from between the blackened lips of the ghostly one. "Drink! drink!"

And the water-bearer fell beside his comrade. Great throbs shook his frame. His breath failed. His eyes became glazed and his dust-covered head, which had hours ago lost its covering, sank down upon the sand. But in the rigid clasp of death his hand held the canteen to his comrade's lips.

"Knocked out by the sun," was Yost's comment; "but he brought back a full canteen. Wal, I've seed lots on 'em, but I never seed one with his grit!"

They buried him by the rocks and wrote his name on a stake, thrust into the sand at his head. And Bunster, who was coming out of death's shadow, looked on and mourned.

That very evening came jingling along the trail a train of burros, led by a thick-set Mexican. There was plenty of good water in his casks and plenty of good food in his packs, and the travellers ate and drank and went their way toward Flagstaff in the Mexican's company. And the sound of the tinkling bells on the burros' necks echoed from the rock under which Zach Rawlins lay and mocked his dull, cold ear.

"I've seed lots on 'em," repeated Yost, as he told the tale to the Mexican—"I've seed lots on 'em, but I never seed one with his grit!"

The following note, which was furnished by the writer in *All the Year Round*, throws some light on the following story:

[Note by Henry Keene-Adams, Esq., M. B., M. R. C. S. The manuscript of which the following pages are a faithful transcript was found by me under circumstances which will become apparent during the progress of the narrative. I found the record an interesting one; but then I looked at it chiefly from a professional point of view. The reader may be all the more likely to agree with me if I refrain from further preface. The statement has no formal heading.]

LUKE VENABLE'S STRANGE EXPERIENCE.

My physician has requested me to put in writing a short and simple account of my experience. This he has desired me to do partly to satisfy his own curiosity, which, like that of a good many other people, was considerably exercised on the subject, and partly to find some occupation for me. I have no objection to do what he asks. I shall neither add any theories nor opinions of my own, nor conceal any part of what actually occurred. If I devote a few lines to describing my manner of life, it is only that the strange facts which I have to set down may be more readily understood.

I wish to say at the outset that I am not, and never have been, a spiritualist, nor a believer in mesmerism, animal magnetism, odic force, or anything of that sort. My experience has no relation to delusions of that kind. Nor am I in any way superstitious. Some of the phenomena which have come under my notice would probably have excited in most people superstitious terrors. It was not so with me. I remained throughout completely master of myself, for the simple reason that I knew perfectly well that these phenomena were due to natural causes, and were capable of explanation according to undiscovered, but simple, natural laws.

I admit, however, that I have all my life been something of a recluse. Left an orphan at a very early age, I was brought up by an uncle; or, rather, he permitted

me to occupy one or two rooms in the great, dreary house in which he lived. As soon as I left the nursery my education was intrusted to the curate of the parish, an excellent man, a scholar and a gentleman, but one who was emphatically not a man of the world, and, therefore, not the best person to be the sole companion of a shy and sensitive creature like myself. I have since thought that it would have been better had I been sent to school. However, I lived at Garston Hall until I was five-and-twenty years of age; and then, some tiresome legal formalities (including sundry interviews with high functionaries) having been concluded, my uncle put me in possession of my house at St. Aidan's (to which I intend returning as soon as this manuscript is finished); handed me a bundle of bonds, vouchers, and the like, together with a banker's pass-book and a check-book; requested me to sign my name at the foot of a deed called a release; shook hands with me, and wished me good-day, exactly as if I had been a visitor who had come down to the hall on business and had stayed over night.

My pride, more than my affections, was hurt at this cool conduct, but I said nothing, and betook myself at once to my new home.

St. Aidan's, as everybody knows, is a watering-place on the coast of the East Riding of Yorkshire, which is beginning to be fashionable. My house, absurdly called the Dingle, lay a mile and a half to the north of the town, not far from the sea-shore. It was small, old and gloomy, being closely surrounded by trees. I soon got used to it, however, and I refused to listen to those who said that I ought to have the woods thinned, so as to admit more light and air to my dwelling.

The sombre appearance of the place suited my idiosyncrasy, and accorded with my habit of mind, which always had a tendency to melancholy. I loved, too, to wander under the dark shade of the trees on a summer noon; or, better still, to sit by my parlor fire and hear them moaning and shrieking like creatures in pain through a long winter's evening.

At the Dingle my sole companion was an old woman, who acted as housekeeper and factotum. A gardener came now and then. The stables were shut up and deserted. My time was occupied in reading, chiefly books on psychology and physiology, and in the dangerous but delightful amusement of day-dream or reverie. Many a time have I spent hours in my little study, or in the summer sitting on a bench in my old-fashioned garden, in a state of semi-unconsciousness, while my fancy led me by the hand and took me beyond the rocky barrier which separates this dull world of ours from "faery land forlorn."

Among a number of miscellaneous volumes I had sent to me, I lighted upon a copy of a book, famous, I believe, in its day, though now but little esteemed—Abercromby on the "Intellectual Powers." The good old doctor there discusses some cases of the curious nervous disease which produces spectral illusions. In one case, I remember, the patient was haunted by the apparition of the little old woman in a red cloak; in another the imaginary ghost took the form of a dog, which so closely resembled a real animal that the gentleman to whom it belonged was sometimes obliged to touch it with his stick in order to satisfy himself that it was not a living and breathing animal.

About this time I also came upon a curious tale of a portrait painter, who possessed the faculty of imagination in so strong a degree that he did not need to trouble his sitters to remain in his studio more than half an hour. After gazing at the face and form of his visitor for that length of time, putting a line or two on the canvas as he did so, he could conjure up that person's appearance at will, and complete the portrait at his ease, working from the imaginary form which his memory supplied.

I well remember the time when it first occurred to me to try whether such a power could not be cultivated. It was the night after a sultry August day. The moonlight streamed on the tangled shrubs and grass-grown walks of the garden, as I sat there enjoying the cool night-air,

I was in a curiously excited, restless state of mind. I had been paying a necessary visit that day to the neighboring town of St. Aidan's—a thing I always hated doing, especially in the summer, when the streets were swarming with visitors. I hurried through these crowds of well-dressed, self-sufficient, foolish, staring people, and did not think myself safe from them till I had reached the stile leading to my own fields. I generally felt restless and ill at ease after one of these visits to the town, but on that evening of which I speak I had a special cause for excitement.

Among other places, I had called at a bookseller's, and on leaving the shop I met face to face in the doorway a girl—a girl of surpassing grace and beauty. A commonplace incident, truly; but it was not commonplace to me. I stood aside to let her pass, and she thanked me with a smile—ah! what sunlight on an April morning could seem so bright? Her hair and eyebrows were dark, but her complexion was pure white. She was rather thin. The color of her eyes—I do not know.

After leaving the shop I felt that I must see her once more. Yielding to the impulse, I went back to the shop. She was still there, and to my inward disgust the tradesman, recognizing in me a regular customer, left her and came over to the other side of the shop to know what I wanted. I did not dare to do more than steal a hasty glance at the lady's face; but in that instant I had engraved her features on my memory. After I left the shop for the second time her face haunted me. I had never seen it before, and I was quite aware that there was but a small probability that I would ever see it again; yet I knew I had it for a possession as long as I should live. I felt that this girl belonged to me, in a sense, in virtue of the homage I paid her.

As I sat in the moonlit garden, it occurred to me to try whether I could not imitate the artist of whom I had read, and coax my eyes to recall the form and lineaments of the girl whose image filled my mind. I

summoned up all my powers, fixed my gaze on the vacant space at the end of the bench on which I was sitting, and tried to imagine that she was actually seated there. I set myself to picture the pale face, the dusky hair, the pose of the head and neck. There, I said to myself, her arm would rest on the elbow of the garden-seat, there her dress—

It came!

Suddenly, unexpectedly, as if my efforts at recalling and picturing the image had nothing to do with it, the sweet vision was before my eyes!

For some minutes I sat silent, revelling in the possession of my treasure, afraid to speak or move lest the phantom should fade away forever. I was well aware that what I saw was purely the creation of my own fancy, a spectral illusion like those mentioned by Dr. Abercromby. But it was delightful to have it by me. The likeness to the original was perfect. The image almost seemed as if it would move and speak, and I liked to fancy that it actually did, but for the most part it remained perfectly still.

As I sat there entranced, I heard on the gravel the footsteps of my housekeeper, who was bringing me my second supply of tea—a beverage of which I am very fond.

I allowed her to approach in silence, marking, in the mean time, the wonderful solidity and lifelikeness, as well as the grace, of the apparition I had conjured up for my companion. When the old dame drew near, I placed my elbows on my knees, and dropped my head in my hands, as if I were half asleep.

"Tea, Morrison?" I said, without looking up; "offer some to the lady."

"The lady, sir? What lady?"

"Why, here—oh, I suppose I must have been dreaming."

Mrs. Morrison was used to my little eccentricities, and did not trouble herself to reply. But I knew now that my new companion was invisible to all but myself, that it was no ghost that haunted me, but a simple nat-

ural illusion. To my chagrin, however, when I looked for it once more it had vanished. One could have fancied that my gentle visitant had taken offence at hearing herself thus spoken of—doubted, put to the test, as it were—and had chosen voluntarily to withdraw herself.

But many times after this the vision of this pale, sweet-faced girl came to cheer my loneliness; I grew to expect her appearance, and even begin to hold conversation with her.

It was toward the end of the month that I met this lady in the flesh for the second time. I was walking along the cliff, as I often did at an hour when the bustling, noisy population of St. Aidan's were otherwise engaged, when I heard a faint cry from the beach below. Looking over the edge I saw that the tide had swept over what was a bank of dry gravel an hour before, and had now drawn near the foot of the cliff, and in the narrow space between the water and the rocks a girl was sitting, with a folded easel and artist's umbrella beside her. Even at that distance I knew her.

I found a way down the cliff—a way which she managed to climb with my help. During those precious minutes she was mine, not in fancy alone, but in flesh and blood. When we reached St. Aidan's we were already friends. Her name, she told me, was Ida. I forget the surname—it is of no consequence.

From that time I lived only in the expectation of meeting her again, and I did meet her often. I supposed that her friends did not object, but I never troubled myself about them.

All those happy weeks that came to us ere the summer ended I wooed Ida for my bride. During our long conversations I opened my mind and my heart to her—told her, even, that I could conjure up her image at will.

"Nay, more," I said to her one day, "I can imagine that I see an image of myself."

"Of yourself!" she echoed. "How perfectly horrible!"

"Not at all," I replied; "I think it most interesting."

"Interesting?—yes, in a way. But so eerie, so uncanny. I should die of fright if such a thing should happen to me."

"Nonsense!" I cried. "Don't you see a phantom of yourself every time you look into a mirror? The apparitions I am telling you of are purely creations of the brain, produced by the imagination acting as a stimulus to the optic nerves. They are as far removed from 'the supernatural,' to use the ordinary foolish term, as your own image reflected in a looking-glass."

"I know—of course," said Ida; "but it seems very odd, very. I don't want to think of such things," adding, a moment afterward: "How did you manage to produce such a spectre? Were you not afraid?"

"Well, to tell the truth, I did feel rather like Frankenstein for a moment or two," I replied; "but that feeling soon wore off. You see, I have long been accustomed to argue and dispute with myself as with a separate being. I often talk to myself."

"A very bad habit," interrupted Ida.

"A very innocent one," I replied. "I like to amuse myself by pitting the lower part of my being against the higher, to see which will win."

"Which does win?" she asked.

"Oh, sometimes one, sometimes the other. Sometimes I subdue my inclinations; sometimes my inclination—my inferior will, as the schoolmen call it—masters me. Well, it occurred to me one day while I was holding an argument with myself that I might try to project an image of myself into the air so that I might seem to be disputing with a real person. I got a mirror and persisted in thinking that I saw the reflection transferred from it—"

"Oh, Luke," she cried, "stop! It seems so strange; almost wicked!"

I laughed.

"You don't seem to comprehend that it is all a trick, a weakness, probably, of one of the nerves leading to the eye, or, perhaps, of that part of the brain through which we see. In my case, an unusual excitement of

the nerve may produce this result. It may be an unusual phenomenon, but it is a perfectly natural one."

"I'm glad I cannot see myself, except in a looking-glass!" cried Ida.

"It was some time," I continued, "before I succeeded in getting a spectral illusion of the kind I wanted; but at length one night, after taking a large quantity of strong tea, I did find that I could see a dim and shadowy figure resembling myself seated opposite to me. Now I can call it up whenever I will; and sometimes—sometimes it visits me even when I do not really desire its presence."

"Perhaps you really do desire it in spite of yourself," said Ida; and I was startled by the truth of the remark.

"I dare say you are right," I replied.

"So you have a dual self?"

"It almost seems so; for in all our discussions and contests I take, of course, the better part—the side of my superior nature. This spectral illusion—this nothing, this figment of my brain and nerves, is the shadowy impersonation of my lower nature."

"Does it ever seem to speak?" asked my companion, in an awe-struck whisper.

"I speak for it," I replied. I did not care to add that I had sometimes fancied—it was the purest fancy, of course—that I heard a word or two, or a laugh, in a tone that seemed an echo of my own.

"And—does it move?"

"I am not sure that it cannot move. Of course it altogether depends on whether I wish to imagine it moving or at rest; but generally, like the image of yourself, when I see it, it is at rest."

At this point Ida called for my judgment upon a blue and brown section of paint on her canvas, which, from the surroundings, I thought was intended to represent either a fragment of jelly-fish or a sunset; and our conversation took another direction.

For some reason, which I never fully understood, Ida did not seem to care that I should present myself at the house of her aunt (a wealthy widow, I believe), with

whom she lived. We continued, after our engagement, to meet either on the cliff or on some retired spot on the beach, regularly at every interview appointing a time and place for our next meeting.

One Tuesday evening—it was a wintry night toward the end of November—I received a note from Ida. I knew it must be from her, though I had never seen her handwriting before. Who else was there to write to me? We had not met for two days; and I was looking forward, with the keenest delight, to seeing her on the morrow. My disappointment, therefore, was bitter, when, eagerly opening her letter, I found that it contained nothing but a trivial excuse for not keeping our tryst on the following day. I had carried my letter into the garden, so that I might read it in perfect seclusion, and I paced the sombre walk between the garden and the plantation in a mood of jealous irritation for some minutes. When I had at length reasoned myself out of this temper, I fell into a state of deep dejection. It was in vain that I told myself that the incident meant nothing; a foreboding of evil filled my heart.

I thought of this proverbial fickleness of the sex; and for the time I gave myself up to believe the worst of them.

"But Ida—she is different," whispered my good angel in my ear.

My only answer to the appeal was a low, mocking laugh—a laugh which was immediately echoed from the wood beside which I was walking. For the moment I was thrilled with superstitious dread. The sound was a fac-simile, a replica of my own laugh. But I soon recovered myself. Surely, I said to myself, it would be odd if there were such a thing as an aural, as well as an optical, illusion. Could one imagine sounds till one actually heard them? The thing was evidently possible. I had been deceived by a figment of my own morbid fancy in the world of sound, as I habitually allowed or compelled my fancy to deceive me in the realm of sight. Yet I peered among the trees to see whether I could discover any one who might have been

laughing at or with me; and—doubtless it was purely a trick of the imagination—it seemed to me that I could catch sight of a dim, unsubstantial form, strangely resembling my own outward appearance, gliding from shadow to shadow among the trees.

On the following day my humor led me to go as usual to the place where I had been in the habit of meeting Ida. It was a melancholy visit. Every rock, every bush, spoke to me of her. I fled from the spot, not caring which direction I took. I had reached a lonely part of the seashore, when, sharply turning a rocky promontory, I came upon Ida face to face.

She was not alone. A man was with her—a man, tall and strong and handsome—but I did not waste a second look upon him. My eyes were fixed on the girl, who clung with both hands to her companion's arm. There must have been something strange and wild in my looks, for Ida neither smiled nor bowed. She only gazed at me with staring, frightened eyes, and I did not accost her.

With feverish impatience I waited for our next meeting. It came; and the first moments I spent with Ida told me that I had lost her. Even now I do not dare to recall the anguish that pierced my heart as she told me, with an affectation of carelessness, that she wished to break off our engagement. She had acted hastily, she said, and inconsiderately. We were not well suited for each other—I would soon find some one more worthy of me than she was—and so forth.

"Who was that man I met walking with you two days ago?" I asked sternly.

She turned pale, and made no reply.

"Your new sweetheart? Or perhaps an old one?"

Her pallor gave way to an indignant blush. I did not listen to what she said in answer. I saw that I was right. I had been fooled—taken up as one takes up a novel to while away an idle hour with it and then throw it away. Now that she had no more occasion for me I was dropped, like a thing of no value. What did this girl, happy in her new conquest, care for my broken heart?

When I left her I felt like a soul that had been turned away from the gate of paradise. I could not rest. I continually haunted the shore and the cliff, that I might catch a passing glimpse of her, to assuage the thirst that raged within me. Often I saw her—the same man always by her side.

Weeks passed, and winter succeeded to summer almost at a bound. Some change must have occurred in the arrangements of the household of which Ida was a member. I saw her no more openly on the sands; but constant watching made me aware that she still met her new lover in secret—met him, good heavens! in the very spot which had been sacred to our love.

It was at this time that the idea of revenging myself on my faithless love first entered my brain. It had not occurred to me before. Then I could only suffer; now I longed to make her suffer, too.

I knew it, and I hated myself, hated and despised myself, for entertaining the wish; yet I cherished it.

One night, after waiting long in the chill November mist, that I might see the flutter of her dress as she passed swiftly homeward from the trysting-place, the black thought came into my mind—suppose I were to watch for her as she passes the corner of the cliff, clasp her in my arms, and leap over the precipice? That would be sweet—sweet to know that we died together, that she should never live to be another's bride!

I revelled in the thought for a few moments. Then I put it from me. It returned. I rejected it again. It came back once more.

Three days, I knew, must pass before the lovers would meet again. I dreaded the coming of the day. The time would be two hours after dusk. What if I should feel impelled to carry out my revenge? I determined to go to sleep until the fatal hour should be past. And, to make the matter sure, I would take a dose of opium.

Going upstairs in the dim and ghostly moonlight, I threw open my bedroom window and leaned out. A silence like the silence of a sepulchre lay around me.

Not a whisper of wind stirred the dark branches of the pines.

And then, suddenly, the temptation fell on me again, like a bolt from the infernal pit. I trembled, withdrew from the window, and covered my face with my hands. I tried to pray—the words would not come. I tried to sink into the attitude of prayer—my knees would not bend.

Then, springing to my feet, I resolved to master the demon that was shaking my soul. I rushed to the door, locked it, and threw the key out of the window. It fell with a sharp clang, and I knew that it had struck against an iron garden-seat which stood in the avenue at some little distance.

Then a new expedient occurred to me. Suppose I dropped out of the window, alighted on the top of a tool-house that stood beneath, and made my way to the seashore? I remembered that I had clambered into the house by that way on one occasion, when I had come home unexpectedly, and had found my housekeeper gone and the house shut up. If I had come in by that way, it would be easy to go out by it.

Shutting the window with a bang, I went to my medicine cupboard, poured out a dose of laudanum, drank it off, and threw myself on the bed.

There I lay, unable to sleep. Perhaps I had taken too little of the drug. At any rate, I felt as one benumbed; and yet my fancy was morbidly alive. I began to wonder whether I was alone. I turned and, in a half-dazed state, looked across toward the window. And there—merciful heaven!—I saw sitting on the window-seat, distinct in the moonlight, the image and figure of myself!

It was I—my second self—or, rather, the spectre, the optical illusion which I had often amused myself by creating. It sat with its head between its hands, just as I myself had sat an hour before. And as I watched it I trembled.

There was nothing surprising in the fact that my optic nerves and the delicate organs of the eyes, excited,

and not soothed to sleep, by the opium, should be capable of presenting me with an image of myself. The thing had often happened to me before; but never had I shrunk from the phantom as I shrank now. What if it should lift its head and look at me? What if it should renew the temptation I dreaded? Was that I, myself, sitting with hidden face? Did I merely imagine that I was lying in bed?

When I awoke the wintry sun was sending a cold radiance through my room. I sprang up, dressed myself, and then, leaping from the window, I picked up the key of my door, with a smile at the weakness I had exhibited the night before. I felt stronger, better than I had done for some time.

The morning passed as usual. In the afternoon my housekeeper brought me my tea, and as she placed the teapot on the table I noticed that her face was big with news.

"Such a terrible thing, sir, has happened on the west cliff! A young lady was missing from home last night, and in the morning they found her lying at the foot of the rocks quite dead. She must have gone out alone and fallen over; but"— in a terrified whisper—"some do say the police think some one pushed her over the edge."

"Ha! ha! ha!" My laughter sounded dreadful to the old woman, I dare say; but I was only yielding to the uncontrollable impulse we all have to smile at moments when levity would be indecent, and thinking, at the same moment, how odd was the coincidence in point of time between the struggle I had undergone on the preceding evening and the accident itself.

I could see, however, that my housekeeper was shocked, and I hastened to say: "Don't look so grave, Mrs. Morrison. It is very dreadful for the poor young lady, no doubt, and for her friends; but I could not help laughing at the folly of the police in imagining that some one had pushed the girl over. Who could have wished to injure her? Why, it would have been murder!"

"True enough, sir," answered Mrs. Morrison; "and to my mind any one as did it must be a devil in the shape of a man." With these words, and a rather impertinent look at me, the old woman left the room.

I felt that I must go and see the spot where she had fallen, not to see the—— I could not bear that. That must have been removed long ago. I went down at once to the seashore, but a crowd of people had gathered round the place, and after a hurried glance down the cliff I retired, determining to return when night had driven those idle busybodies indoors.

Having returned home, I went upstairs, and, happening to go into my bedroom, I noticed that the suit of tweeds which I had worn the day before were marked all over with greenish mould. It was another curious coincidence. Had I been, by some absurd freak of fortune, accused of having caused poor Ida's death, would not some say that I had soiled my clothes by leaving my room by the window at night? They might call it, in their legal jargon, "circumstantial evidence." Ha! ha! I got a brush and made short work of the circumstantial evidence.

Night came, the moon arose, and I went down to the cliff. I was alone. How softly the water lapped upon the stones far below! And it was here—yes, it was here. There were the marks of a struggle on that spot of ground fenced off by the police. How brightly the moon's rays lit up the dark water out there! When had I seen it shining just in that way? Not so long ago. I was waiting for some one. It was like a dream; but I could not recall it.

I went home, and slept as usual.

In the morning, when I went downstairs, a policeman met me in the hall. He followed me into the sitting-room. I sat down, and he stood opposite me, speaking of the accident which they said had happened to Ida. He seemed to think I was mixed up in it.

"What's that you have in your hand, sir?" he asked suddenly; and darting forward, he took from me something which I had drawn from my pocket and had been

absently twining round my fingers. I looked at it without much interest, but he seemed to think it of great importance. It was only a fragment of stuff such as women's dresses are made of. I remember Ida used to wear dresses of that sort of material; but of course it could not possibly have belonged to her or I should not have let him have it.

That very day he took me to see the magistrates, and they actually sent me to prison.

My trial has not come off yet—or rather it did come off and was postponed. I have come here to wait until the assizes come round again. It seems a long, long time. I believe they have forgotten me, or else they have bribed the superintendent to detain me. Sometimes I think they mean to keep me here always—always—always.

But I know now who pushed my darling over the cliff down among the cruel stones—it was that fiend in my own shape that I saw sitting by the window in the moonlight.

Casuists will find in this story of two women and a man a nice opportunity for adjusting the degree of moral responsibility which each should bear. It is an original story, written for ROMANCE by Johanna Staats.

71 AND 72.

THEY met at the Mont de Piété. This office of pledges and redemptions—this Parisian shrine of poverty and central altar of official usury—was crowded. A long line like a torpidly winding serpent stretched itself lazily far out into the Rue des Blancs-Manteaux. For several hours the clerk behind his grated window has droned out the numbers as he bent his worn face above the greasy book in which he is busy inscribing names and addresses.

"Again? So soon? And still pretty!" with a vicious smile. "Lace pin—with small diamond—hum! Twenty francs for 71. Pass on quickly! Next! Well! And you? A carved crucifix. Ivory? No. Five francs for 72."

"No more?"

"No more. Take or leave. You detain others. Decide."

Number 72 hesitates. Suddenly a rough hand tugs at her shabby shawl. She turns. It is number 71. A moment later the two girls stand side by side in the street.

"Here! Take this," mutters 71. "I insist. I stole your luck by my odd number. Besides—it is to cheat the devil. No? Why? What a little fool!"

72 has a face like a pale flame. Her lips are blue, and much shivering has rounded her thin shoulders. 71 is ready, facile, a feminine gamin. She thrives on Paris as a dandelion flaunts from the crevice of a paving-stone. The one is smiling, yet dumb with amazement. The other talks, laughs, yet will never smile again.

"Tut! A few francs! What are they to me? and I

shall redeem my pin to-morrow, while you"—a glance completed the sentence.

"And I—it was that I might celebrate Paul's fête day."

"You live—"

"At No. —an attic in the Rue Sainte Marguerite. He—Paul—works at the theatre. It is a good position, but it requires that he appear well to keep it. This eats his earnings as a moth eats feathers. We are from the South—Paul and I. He is happy here—but I—"

"Amuse yourself by starving that he may—oh! I comprehend. Here!"—and she draws her into a wine-shop. "Waiter! A basket! Now fill it! First—a bottle of wine, then a sugared loaf—then a pâté—some of those. 'Tis I who shall supply Paul's feast. But on one condition, my friend—that you eat your half. And the wine is for you." Paying the waiter, 71 drops the change into the loaded basket.

"And I who accept this—do not yet know your name!" 72 is grateful, but there are no tears. Tears are a luxury with the poor.

"Call me—number 71."

"I shall call you—my saint."

"Anything but that, my girl. Well—72—I shall see you again." And she watches her stagger away beneath her burden.

"Mademoiselle is generous!" ventures the waiter, who has followed them outside the shop.

"Nonsense! It is my caprice! She is dying—that girl. It is written. And her Paul? A fine selfish scamp, I'll warrant." And with a laugh and a whirl on her heel she hurries away.

. . . . . .

One year in a Parisian garret. One year of green country quiet exchanged for the lullaby of Paris—that mother who too often sings her babies to their deaths. To be sure, there has always been Paul, and looking in his eyes Jeanne could forget her home-sickness. And with his arm for a pillow, her straw had not seemed a hard bed. But he was forced to be at the theatre early

and late. And nowadays his absences were growing longer. Jeanne fancied at times that he was less tender. Paul was tired—tired of being poor. Was it that Poverty was pinching Love to death? She did not know—but felt a chill about her heart—a dangerous thing when the body is also cold.

Some one else would beat the ragout on Paul's next fête day. But Paul came and went, and noticed nothing.

One night in his sleep Jeanne heard him utter a name.

She leaned to listen, but he said no more, only smiling in his sleep. She thought it was "Susanne." In the morning she questioned him.

"I was dreaming. What of it?" said he, staring floorward.

Before he went away that morning he drew her fondly toward him, and tenderly kissed her rough and reddened slender hands. It was a revival of love, Jeanne thought, and sang softly to herself all of that day. Life was easier after this. Paul grew more kind, and a new pleasure was also hers.

She did not know that it is a man's way when he loves one to kiss the *other* dumb.

And every day at noon her "saint" came for an hour. Every day, in some small way, Jeanne's small wants grew smaller. Every day 71 sat beside 72 upon the low straw pallet and laughed and jested until Jeanne grew merry from sheer contagion.

"We will thank her together—when you are well again, my Jeanne, and find out also her real name," Paul would say in his absent-minded way.

When Jeanne was well again!

One morning she seemed suddenly so weak that Paul found it impossible to leave her. For the first time he became uneasy. She did not complain, merely remaining strangely quiet. And her eyes shone as on that night beneath the lindens long ago. The night they first spoke of a marriage—their own.

"But it is nothing," she murmured while her starry eyes looked past him across the glaring roofs so coldly

bright in the wintry sunlight. It was broad day in Paris, but in Jeanne's life candle-time had come.

"Paul!"

"My Jeanne!"

"You love me?'

"My little one! How can you ask? You break my heart!"

"As dearly as ever, Paul?"

"As dearly as ever." And Paul softly stroked a very happy face.

Just then, above the lullaby with which Paris was singing Jeanne to sleep, some rollicking, distant bells rang out the hour. Jeanne raised herself upon her elbow, and with one hand threw back the drooping locks from her little white ear.

"Hark!"

As they listened they heard a merry clatter of high heels on the bare stairway.

"It is—number 71!"

As she spoke a piquant figure stood framed within the low doorway.

"Paul!—my 'saint!'"

And then two stood alone in the little sunny garret, for just at that moment Jeanne's soul fled.

"Susanne! *You*—her saint!" and with a hoarse cry Paul dropped the dead hand on the straw.

"And so—to her, you were Paul! My God!"

And Jeanne?

A little smile stole softly about her lips. It was Death, who in joke had tricked Life out of one sorrow.

A Christmas posy out of the fragrant garden of stories by Hans Christian Andersen is not amiss at this season. In offering it to the readers of ROMANCE it is with the assuranee that if it seems familiar to some, it will be acceptable to all.

THE OLD OAK-TREE'S LAST DREAM.

THERE stood in the wood, high on a bank near the open sea-shore, such a splendid old oak-tree! It was just three hundred and sixty-five years old; but all this length of years had seemed to the tree scarcely more than so many days appear to us men and women. A tree's life is not quite the same as a man's; we wake during the day and sleep and dream during the night; but a tree wakes throughout three seasons of the year, and has no sleep till winter comes. The winter is its sleeping-time—its night after the long day which we call spring, summer, and autumn.

Through many a warm day had the May-flies danced in light, innocent glee round his crown; and if for a moment one of the little creatures rested from its play on one of the large fresh oak-leaves the tree would say, "Poor little insect! only one long day is thy brief life! how sad that is!"

"Sad!" would the little May-fly then exclaim in wonder. "What meanest thou by 'sad'? Everything is so bright, warm, and beautiful, and I am so happy!"

"But only for one day, and then all is past for thee."

"Past?" repeated the little May-fly. "What is 'past'? Art thou 'past' too?"

"No; I shall live thousands, perhaps, of thy days, and my days last a whole year. But that is something so long, thou canst not reckon it."

"Well, then, I don't understand thee at all. Thou hast thousands of days, and I have thousands of moments, to be happy and joyous. Will the beauty of this world cease when thou diest?"

"No," said the tree; "it will last longer, infinitely longer."

"Well, then, we are in the same case, only I reckon differently."

And the May-fly danced hither and thither, rejoiced over her fine delicate wings, and revelled in the warm atmosphere, which was so perfumed with the delicious scents from the clover-field and the wild roses, elders, and honeysuckles of the hedge, not to speak of blue-bells, cowslips, and wild thyme, that the little insect felt as if it were intoxicated with sweet odors. The day was long, full of brightness, beauty, and joy, and by sunset the little May-fly felt wearied out with pleasant excitement. Her wings would bear her no longer; softly she glided down upon the cool, rocking blades of grass, nodded her little head, and slept the happy sleep of death.

"Poor little May-fly!" quoth the Oak-tree; "thine was too brief an existence."

And every summer day recurred the same dance, the same argument, and the same peaceful falling asleep; it was repeated through whole generations of May-flies, all light-hearted and joyous.

The Oak-tree stood wide awake during his spring morning, his summer noon, his autumnal evening; now it was nearly night; winter was drawing nigh. Already the storms were singing, "Good-night, good-night! there falls a leaf, there falls a leaf! we plucked it, we plucked it! sleep soundly! we will sing thee to sleep! we will rock thee to sleep! we do no harm, we do the old boughs good; they crack and rustle and swing, all from pure pleasure. Sleep soundly! sleep soundly! it is thy three hundred and sixty-fifth night, but thou art as fresh as a sapling but a year old; sleep soundly! The skies are dripping with snow—will shake a warm white coverlet over thy feet; sleep soundly, and dream pleasant dreams!"

And the Oak-tree stood stripped of all his foliage, ready to go to rest for the winter, and in it to dream many dreams—to dream of the past, just as men dream,

The tree had once been a little one, and had had a field for his cradle. Now, according to human reckoning, he was in his fourth century; he was the tallest and mightiest tree in the wood; his crown towered high above all other trees, and was seen far out on the sea, serving as a beacon to ships; but the old Oak-tree had never thought how many eyes sought him out from afar. High up in his green crown wood-doves had built their nests, and the cuckoo perched to announce spring; in the autumn, when his leaves looked like copper-plates hammered out thin, birds of passage came and rested awhile among the boughs before they flew across the sea.

But now it was winter; the tree stood leafless, and the bowed and crooked branches displayed their dark outlines; crows and jackdaws came alternately, gossiping together about the hard times that were beginning, and the difficulty of getting food during the winter.

It was just at the holy Christmas-tide that the Oak-tree dreamt his most beautiful dream; this dream we will hear.

The tree had a foreboding that a festive season was nigh; he seemed to hear the church bells ringing all round, and to feel as though it were a mild, warm summer day; fresh and green, he reared his mighty crown on high, the sunbeams played among his leaves and boughs, the air was filled with fragrance, bright-colored butterflies gambolled, and gnats danced—which was all they could do to show their joy. And all that the tree had beheld during his life passed by as in a festive procession.

Knights and ladies, with feathers in their caps, and hawks perching on their wrists, rode gayly through the wood, dogs barked, and the huntsman sounded his bugle. Then came the foreign soldiers in bright armor and gay vestments, bearing spears and halberds, setting up their tents, and presently taking them down again; then watch-fires blazed up, and bands of wild outlaws sang, revelled, and slept under the tree's outstretched boughs, or happy lovers met in the quiet moonlight and carved their initials on the grayish bark. At one time

a guitar, at another an Æolian harp, had been hung up amid the old oak's boughs, by merry travelling apprentices; now they hung there again, and the wind played so sweetly with the strings! The wood-doves cooed, as though they would do their best to express the tree's happy feelings, and the cuckoo talked about himself as usual, proclaiming how many summer days he had to live.

And now it seemed a new and stronger current of life flowed through him, down to his lowest roots, up to his highest twigs, even to the very leaves! the tree felt in his roots that a warm life stirred in the earth, felt his strength increase, and that he was growing taller and taller; his trunk shot up more and more, his crown grew fuller, he spread, he towered, and still as the tree grew he felt that his power grew with it, and that his ardent longing to advance higher and higher up to the bright warm sun increased also.

Already he had towered above the clouds, which drifted below him, now like a troop of dark-plumaged birds of passage, now like flocks of large white swans.

And every leaf could see as though it had eyes; the stars became visible by daylight, so large and bright each one sparkled like a mild, clear eye; they reminded him of dear, kind eyes that had sought each other under his shade—lovers' eyes, children's eyes.

It was a blessed moment! and yet, in the height of his joy, the Oak-tree felt a desire and longing that all the other trees, bushes, herbs, and flowers of the wood might be lifted up with him, might share in this glory and gladness. The mighty Oak-tree, amid his dream of splendor, could not be fully blessed unless he might have all, little and great, to share with him; and this feeling thrilled boughs and leaves as strongly, as fervently, as though his were the heart of a man.

The tree's crown bowed itself, as though it missed and sought something, looked backward. Then he felt the fragrance of honeysuckles and violets, and fancied he could hear the cuckoo answering himself.

Yes, so it was! for now peeped forth, through the

clouds, the green summits of the wood; the other trees below had grown and lifted themselves up likewise; bushes and herbs shot high into the air, some tearing themselves loose from their roots, and mounting all the faster. The birch had grown most rapidly; like a flash of white lightning, its slender stem shot upward, its boughs waving like pale-green banners. Even the feathery brown reed had pierced its way through the clouds; and the birds followed and sang and sang, and on the grass that fluttered to and fro, like a long streaming green ribbon, perched the grasshopper, and drummed with his wings on his lean body; the cock-chafers hummed, and the bee buzzed; every bird sang with all his might and all his music and gladness.

"But the little blue flower near the water—I want that too," said the Oak-tree; "and the bell-flower, and the dear little daisy!" The tree wanted all these.

"We are here! we are here!" chanted sweet, low voices on all sides.

"But the pretty anemones of last spring, and the bed of lilies-of-the-valley that blossomed the year before that! and the wild crab-apple tree! and all the beautiful trees and flowers that have adorned the wood through so many seasons—oh, would that they had lived till now!"

"We are here! we are here!" was the answer; and this time it seemed to come from the air above, as though they had fled upward first.

"Oh, this is too great happiness, it is almost incredible!" exclaimed the Oak-tree; "I have them all, small and great; not one of them is forgotten! How can such blessedness be possible?"

"In the kingdom of God all things are possible," was the answer.

And the tree felt now that his roots were loosening themselves from the earth.

"This is best of all," he said; "now no bonds shall detain me; I can soar up to the height of light and glory; and my dear ones with me, small and great—I have them all!"

. . . . . .

Such was the old Oak-tree's dream; and all the while on that holy Christmas Eve a mighty storm swept over sea and land; the ocean rolled its heavy billows on the shore, the tree cracked, was rent and torn up by the roots, at the very moment when he dreamt that his roots were disengaging themselves from the earth. He fell. His three hundred and sixty-five years were now as a day is to the May-fly.

On Christmas morning when the sun burst forth the storm was laid; all the church bells were ringing joyously and from every chimney, even the poorest, the blue smoke curled upward, as from the Druid's altar of old uprose the sacrificed steam. The sea was calm again, and a large vessel that had weathered the storm the night before now hoisted all its flags in token of Yule festivity.

"The tree is gone—the old Oak-tree, our beacon," said the crew; "it has fallen during last night's storm. How can its place ever be supplied?"

This was the tree's eulogium, brief, but well meant. There he lay outstretched upon the snowy carpet near the shore, while over it re-echoed the hymn sung on shipboard, the hymn sung in thanksgiving and the joy of Christmas, for the bliss of the human soul's salvation, through Christ, and the gift of eternal life:

Sing loud, and raise your voices high,
For your redemption draweth nigh;
Lift up your hearts, and have no fear!
The promised kingdom, it is here!

O, take the gift, in joy receive;
All things are his who will believe;
O little flock, what words can tell
The bliss of souls Christ loved so well?
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Thus resounded the old hymn, and every soul lifted up heart and desire heavenward, even as the old tree had lifted himself on his last, best dream—his Christmas Eve dream.

ROMANCE.

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In the gallery of interesting types of womankind to be found in this number of ROMANCE, none is more worthy of observation than the heroine of this story, whose portrait has been sketched by Grant Allen.

LUCRETIA.

I WILL acknowledge that I was certainly a very young man in the year '67; indeed, I was only just turned of twenty, and was inordinately proud of a slight downy fringe on my upper lip, which I was pleased to speak of as my mustache. Still, I was a sturdy young fellow enough, in spite of my consumptive tendencies, and not given to groundless fears in a general way; but I must allow that I was decidedly frightened by my adventure in the Richmond hotel during the aforesaid year of grace. It may be a foolish reminiscence, yet I dare say you won't mind listening to it.

When I say the Richmond hotel, you must not understand me to speak of the Star and Garter in the town of that ilk situated in the county of Surrey, England. The Richmond where I passed my uncomfortable Christmas Eve stands on the banks of the pretty St. Francis River in Lower Canada. I had gone out to the colony in the autumn of that year, to look after a small property of my mother's near Kamouraska; and I originally intended to spend the winter in Quebec. But as November and December wore away, and the snow grew deeper and deeper upon the Plains of Abraham, I became gradually aware that a Canadian winter was not the best-adapted tonic in the world for a hearty young man with a slight hereditary predisposition to consumption. I had seen enough of arctic life in Quebec during those two initial months to give me a good idea of its pleasures and its drawbacks. I had steered by toboggan down the ice-cone at the Falls of Montmorenci; I had driven a sleigh, *tête-à-tête* with a

French-Canadian belle, to a surprise-picnic in a house at Sainte Anne; I had skated, snow-shoed, and curled to my heart's content; and I had caught my death of cold on the frozen St. Lawrence, not to mention such minor misfortunes as getting my nose, ears, and feet frost-bitten during a driving-party up the banks of the Chaudière. So, a few days before Christmas, I determined to strike south. I would go for a tour through Virginia and the Carolinas, to escape the cold weather, waiting for the return of the summer sun to catch a glimpse of Niagara and the Great Lakes.

For this purpose I must first go to Montreal; and, that being the case, what could be more convenient than to spend the holidays with the rector at Richmond, to whom I had letters of introduction, his wife being in fact a first cousin of my mother's? Richmond lies halfway on the Grand Trunk line between Quebec and Montreal, and it would be more pleasant, by breaking my journey there, to eat my turkey and plum-pudding in a friend's family than in that somewhat cheerless hotel, the Dominion Hall. So off I started from the Point Levy station, at 4 o'clock on the twenty-fourth of December, hoping to arrive at my journey's end about 1 o'clock.

Now, those were the days just after the great American civil war, when gold was almost unknown either in the States or Canada, and everybody used greasy dollar-notes of uncertain and purely local value. Hence I was compelled to take the money for expenses on my projected tour in the only form of specie which was available, that of solid silver. A hundred and fifty pounds in silver dollars amounts to a larger bulk and a heavier weight than you would suppose; and I thought it safer to carry the sum in my own hands, loosely bundled into a large leather reticule. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ*—that was the real cause of my night's adventure and of the present story.

When I got into the long open American railway-carriage, with its comfortable stove and warm foot-bricks, I found only one seat vacant, and that was a

red velvet sofa, opposite to another occupied by a girl of singular beauty. I can remember to this day exactly how she was dressed. I dare say my lady readers will think it horribly old-fashioned at the present time, but it was the very latest and most enchanting style in the year '67. On her head was a coquettish little cheese-plate bonnet, bound round with one of those warm, soft, fleecy woollen veils or head-wraps which Canadian girls know as nubias. Her dress was a short winter walking-costume of the period, trimmed with fur, and vandyked at the bottom so as to show a glimpse of the quilted down petticoat underneath. Her little high-heeled boots, displayed by the short costume, were buttoned far above the ankle, and bound with fur to match the dress; while a tiny tassel at the side added just a suspicion of Parisian coquetry. Her cloak was lined with sable, or what seemed so to my undiscriminating eyes; and her rug was a splendid piece of wolverine skins. As to her eyes, her lips, her figure, I had rather not attempt them. I can manage clothes, but not goddesses. Altogether, quite a dream of Canadian beauty, not devoid of that indefinable grace which goes only with the French blood.

I was not bold in '67, and I would have preferred to take any other seat rather than face this divine apparition; but there was no help for it, since all the others were filled: so I sat down a little sheepishly, I dare say. Almost before we were well out of the station we had got into a conversation, and it was *she* who began it.

"You are an Englishman, I think?" she said, looking at me with a frank and pleasant smile.

"Yes," I answered, coloring, though why I should have been ashamed of my nationality for that solitary moment of my life I cannot imagine—unless, perhaps, because *she* was a Canadian, "but how on earth did you discover it?"

"You would have been more warmly wrapped up if you had lived long in Canada," she replied. "In spite of our stoves and hot bricks, you'll find yourself very cold before you get to your journey's end."

"Yes," I said; "I suppose it's rather chilly late at night in these big cars."

"Dreadfully; oh, quite terribly! You ought to have a rug, you really ought! Won't you let me lend you one? I have another under the seat here."

"But you brought that for yourself," I interposed. "You will want it by and by, when it gets a little colder."

"Oh, no, I shan't! This is warm enough for me; it's wolverine. You have a mother?"

What an extraordinary question, I thought, and what an unusually friendly girl! Was she really quite as simple-minded as she seemed, or could she be the "designing woman" of the novels? Yes, I admitted to her cautiously that I possessed a maternal parent, who was at that moment safely drinking her tea in a terrace at South Kensington.

"*I* have none," she said, with an emphasis on the personal pronoun, and a sort of appealing look in her big eyes. "But you should take care of yourself, for her sake. You really *must* take my rug. *Hundreds*, oh, *thousands* of young Englishmen come out here and kill themselves their first winter by imprudence."

Thus adjured, I accepted the rug with many thanks and apologies, and wrapped myself warmly up in the corner, with a splendid view of my *vis-à-vis*.

Exactly at that moment, the ticket collector came round upon his official tour. Now, on Canadian railways at that time you did not take your ticket beforehand, but paid your fare to the collector, who walked up and down through the open cars from end to end, between every station. I lifted up my bag of silver, which lay on the seat beside me, and imprudently opened it to take out a few dollars full in sight of my enchanting neighbor. I saw her look with unaffected curiosity at the heap of coin within, and I was proud at being able to give such unequivocal proof of my high respectability—for what better guarantee of all the noblest moral qualities can any man produce all the world over than a bag of dollars?

"What a lot of money!" she said, as the collector passed on. "What can you want with it all in coin?"

"I'm going on a tour in the Southern States," I confided, in reply, "and I thought it better to take specie." (I was very proud in those years of that word *specie.*)

"And I suppose those are your initials on the reticule. What a pretty monogram. Your mother gave you that for a birthday present!"

"You must be a conjurer or a clairvoyant," I said, smiling. "So she did;" and I added that the initials represented my humble patronymic and baptismal designations.

"My name's Lucretia," said my neighbor artlessly, as a child might have said it, without a word as to surname or qualifying circumstances; and from that moment she became to me simply Lucretia. I think of her as Lucretia to the present day. As she spoke, she pointed to the word engraved in tiny letters on her pretty silver locket.

I suppose she thought my confidence required a little more confidence in return, for after a slight pause she repeated once more, "My name's Lucretia, and I live at Richmond."

"Richmond!" I cried. "Why, that's just where I'm going! Do you know the rector?"

"Mr. Pritchard? Oh, yes, intimately. He's our greatest friend. Are you going to stop with him?"

"For a day or two at least, on my way to Montreal. Mrs. Pritchard is my mother's cousin."

"How delightful! Then we may consider ourselves acquaintances. But you don't mean to knock them up to-night? They'll all be in bed long before 1 o'clock."

"No, I haven't even written to tell them I was coming," I answered. "They gave me a general invitation, and said I might drop in whenever I pleased."

"Then you must stop at the hotel to-night. I'm going there myself. My people keep the hotel."

Was it possible! I was thunderstruck. I had pictured Lucretia to myself as at least a countess of the *ancien régime*, a few of whom still linger on in Montreal

and elsewhere. Her locket, her rugs, her eyes, her chiselled features, all of them seemed to me redolent of the old French *noblesse*. And here it turned out that this living angel was only the daughter of an innkeeper! But in that primitive and pleasant Canadian society such things, I thought, can easily be. No doubt she is the petted child of the house, the one heiress of the old man's savings; and after spending a winter holiday among the gayeties of Quebec, she is now returning to pass the Christmas season with her own family. I will not conceal the fact that I had already fallen over head and ears in love with Lucretia at first sight, and that frank avowal made me love her all the more. Besides, these Canadian hotel-keepers are often very rich; and was not her manner perfect, and was she not an intimate friend of the rector and his wife? All these things showed at least that she was accustomed to refined society. I caught myself already speculating as to what my mother would think of such a match.

In five minutes it was all arranged about the hotel, and I had got into the midst of a swimming conversation with Lucretia She told me about herself and her past; how she had been educated at a convent in Montreal, and loved the nuns, oh *so* dearly, though she was a Protestant herself, and only French on her mother's side. (This, I thought, was well, as a safeguard against parental prejudice.) She told me all the gossip of Richmond, and whom I should meet at the rector's, and what a dull little town it was. But Quebec was delightful, and Montreal—oh, if she could only live in Montreal, it would be perfect bliss! And so I thought myself, if only Lucretia would live there with me; but I prudently refrained from saying so, as I thought it rather premature. Or perhaps I blushed and stammered too much to get the words out. "Had she ever been in Europe?" No, never, but she would *so* like it! "Ah! it would be delightful to spend a month or two in Paris," I suggested, with internal pictures of a honeymoon floating through my brain. "Yes, that would

be most enjoyable," she answered. Altogether, Lucretia and I kept chatting uninterruptedly the whole way to Richmond, and the other passengers must have voted us most unconscionable bores; for they evidently could not sleep by reason of our incessant talking. *We* did not sleep, nor wish to sleep. And I am bound to say that a more frankly enchanting or seemingly guileless girl than Lucretia I have never met from that day to this.

At last we reached Richmond depot (as the Canadians call the stations), very cold and tired externally, but lively enough as regards the internal fires. We got out, and looked after our luggage. A sleepy porter promised to bring it next morning to the hotel. There were no sleighs in waiting—Richmond is too much of a country station for that—so I took my reticule in my hand, threw Lucretia's rug across her shoulders, and proceeded to walk with her to the hotel.

Now, the "depot" is in a suburb known as Melbourne, while Richmond itself lies on the other side of the river St. Francis, here crossed by a long covered bridge, a sort of rough wooden counterpart of the famous one at Lucerne. As we passed out into the cold night, it was snowing heavily, and the frost was very bitter. Lucretia took my arm without a word of prelude, as naturally as if she were my sister, and guided me through the snow-covered path to the bridge. When we got under the shelter of the wooden covering, we had to pass through the long dark gallery, as black as night, heading only for the dim square of moonlight at the other end. But Lucretia walked and chatted on as unconcernedly as if she had always been in the habit of traversing that lonely tunnel-like bridge with a total stranger every evening of her life. I confess I was surprised. I fancied a prim English girl in a similar situation, and I began to wonder whether all this artlessness was really as genuine as it looked.

At the opposite end of the bridge we emerged upon a street of wooden frame houses. In one of them only was there a light. "That's the hotel!" said Lucretia,

nodding toward it, and again I suffered a thrill of disappointment. I had pictured to myself a great solid building like the St. Lawrence Hall at Montreal, forgetting that Richmond was a mere country village; and here I found a bit of a frame cottage as the whole domain of Lucretia's supposed father. It was too awful!

We reached the door and entered. Fresh surprises were in store for me. The passage led into a bar, where half a dozen French-Canadians were sitting with bottles and glasses, playing some game of cards. One rather rough-looking young man jumped up in astonishment as we entered, and exclaimed, "Why, Lucretia, we didn't expect you for another hour! I meant to take the sleigh for you." I could have knocked him down for calling her by her Christian name, but the conviction flashed upon me that this was Lucretia's brother. He glanced up at the big Yankee clock on the mantelpiece, which pointed to a quarter past 12, then pulled out his watch and whistled "Stopped three-quarters of an hour ago, by Jingo!" was his comment. "Why, I forgot to wind it up! Upon my word, Lucretia, I'm awfully sorry. But who is the gentleman?"

"A friend of the Pritchards, Tom dear, who wants a bed here to-night. I couldn't imagine why the sleigh didn't come for me. It's so unlike you not to remember it." And she gave him a look to melt adamant.

Tom was profuse in his apologies, and made it quite clear that his intentions at least had been most excellent; besides, he kissed Lucretia with so much brotherly tenderness that I relented of my desire to knock him down. Then brother and sister retired for a while, apparently to see after my bedroom, and I was left alone in the bar.

I cannot say I liked the look of it. The men were drinking whiskey and playing *écarté*—two bad things, I thought in my twenty-year-old propriety. My dear mother hated gambling, which hatred she had instilled into my youthful mind, and this was evidently a backwoods gambling-house. Moreover, I carried a bag of silver coin, quite large enough to make it well worth

while to rob me. The appearances were clearly against Lucretia's home; but surely Lucretia herself was a guarantee for anything.

Presently Tom returned, and told me my room was ready. I followed him up the stairs with a beating heart and a heavy reticule. At the top of the landing Lucretia stood smiling, my candle in her hand, and showed me into the room. Tom and she looked around to see that all was comfortable, and then they both shook hands with me, which certainly seemed a curious thing for an innkeeper and his sister. As soon as they were gone, I began to look about me and consider the situation. The room had two doors, but the key was gone from both. I opened the one toward the passage, but found no key outside; the other, which probably communicated with a neighboring bedroom, was locked from the opposite side. Moreover, there had once been a common bolt on this second door, but it had been removed. I looked close at the screw-holes and was sure they were quite fresh. Could the bolt have been taken off while I was waiting in the bar? All at once it flashed upon my mind that I had been imprudently confiding in my disclosures to Lucretia. I had told her that I carried a hundred and fifty pounds in coin, an easy thing to rob and a difficult thing to identify. She had heard that nobody was aware of my presence in Richmond except herself and her brother. I had not written to tell the Pritchards I was coming, and she knew that I had not told any one of my whereabouts, because I did not decide where I should go until I talked with her about the matter. No one in Canada would miss me. If these people chose to murder me for my money (and innkeepers often murder their guests, I thought), nobody would think of inquiring or know where to inquire for me. Weeks would elapse before my mother wrote from England to ask my whereabouts, and by that time all traces might well be lost. I left Quebec only telling the people at my hotel that I was going to Montreal. Then I thought of Lucretia's eagerness to get into conversation, her observation

about my money, her suggestion that I should come to the Richmond hotel. And how could she, a small innkeeper's daughter, afford to get all those fine furs and lockets by fair means? Did she really know the Pritchards, or was it likely, considering her position? All these things came across me in a moment. What a fool I had been ever to think of trusting such a girl!

I got up and walked about the room. It was evidently Lucretia's own bedroom; "part of the decoy," said I to myself sapiently. But could so beautiful a girl really hurt one? A piece of music was lying on the dressing-table. I took it up and looked at it casually. Gracious heavens! it was a song from "Lucrezia Borgia!" Her very name betrayed her! She too was a Lucretia! I walked over to the mantel-piece. A little ivory miniature hung above the centre: I gave it a glance as I passed. Incredible! It was the Beatrice Cenci. Talk of beautiful women! Why, they poison one, they stab one, they burn one alive, with a smile on their lips! Lucretia must have a taste for murderesses. Evidently she is a connoisseur.

At least, thought I, I shall sell my life dearly. I could not go to bed; but I pulled the bedstead over against one of the doors—the locked one—and I laid the mattress down in front of the other. Then I lay down on the mattress, my money-bag under my head, and put the poker conveniently by my side. If they came to rob and murder me, they should at least have a broken head to account for next day. But I soon got tired of this defensive attitude, and reflected that, if I must lie awake all night, I might as well have something to read. So I went over to the little bookcase and took down the first book which came to hand. It bore on the outside the title "Œuvres de Victor Hugo. Tome Ier. Théâtre." "This, at any rate," said I to myself, "will be light and interesting." I returned to my mattress, opened the volume, and began to read *Le Roi s'amuse.*

I had never before dipped into that terrible drama, and I devoured it with a horrid avidity. I read how

Triboulet bribed the gypsy to murder the king; how the gipsy's sister beguiled him into the hut; how the plot was matured; and how the sack containing the corpse was delivered over to Triboulet. It was an awful play to read on such a night and in such a place, with the wind howling round the corners and the snow gathering deeply upon the window-panes. I was in a considerable state of fright when I began it; I was in an agony of terror before I had got half-way through. Now and then I heard footsteps on the stairs: again I could distinguish two voices, one a woman's, whispering outside the door; a little later, the other door was very slightly opened and then pushed back again stealthily by a man's hand. Still I read on. At last, just as I reached the point where Triboulet is about to throw the corpse into the river, my candle, a mere end, began to sputter in its socket, and after a few ineffectual flickers suddenly went out, leaving me in the dark till morning.

I lay down once more, trembling but wearied out. A few minutes later the voices came again. The further door was opened a second time, and I saw dimly a pair of eyes (*not*, I felt sure, Lucretia's) peering in the gloom, and reflecting the light from the snow on the window. A man's voice said huskily in an undertone, "It's all right now;" and then there was a silence. I knew they were coming to murder me. I clutched the poker firmly, stood on guard over the dollars, and waited the assault. The moment that intervened seemed like a lifetime.

A minute! Five minutes! A quarter of an hour! They are evidently trying to take me off my guard. Perhaps they saw the poker; in any case, they must have felt the bedstead against the door. That would show them that I expected them. I held my watch to my ear and counted the seconds, then the minutes, then the hours. When the candle went out it was 3 o'clock. I counted up till about half-past 5.

After that I must have fallen asleep from very weariness. My head glided back upon the reticule, and I

dozed uneasily until morning. Every now and then I started in my sleep, but the murderers hung back. When I awoke it was 8 o'clock, and the dollars were still safe under my head. I rose wearily, washed myself, and arranged the tumbled clothes in which I had slept, for my portmanteau had not yet arrived from the depot. Next I put back the bed and mattress, and then I took the dollars and went downstairs to the bar, hardly knowing whether to laugh at my last night's terror, or to congratulate myself on my lucky escape from a den of robbers. At the foot of the stairs, whom should I come across but Lucretia herself!

In a moment the doubt was gone. She was enchanting. Quite a different style of dress, but equally lovely and suitable. A long figured gown of some fine woollen material, giving very nearly the effect of a plain neat print, and made quite simply to fit her perfect little figure. A plain linen collar and a quiet silver brooch. Hair tied in a single broad knot above the head, instead of yesterday's chignon and cheese-plate. Altogether, a model winter-morning costume for a cold climate. And as she advanced frankly, holding out her hand with a smile, I could have cut my own throat with a pocket-knife as a merited punishment for daring to distrust her. Such is human nature at the ripe age of twenty!

"We were so afraid you didn't sleep, Tom and I!" she said, with a little tone of anxiety; "we saw a light in your room till so very late, and Tom opened the door a wee bit once or twice to see if you were sleeping; but he said you seemed to have pulled the mattress on the floor. I *do* hope you weren't ill!"

What on earth could I answer? Dare I tell this angel how I had suspected her? Impossible! "Well," I stammered out, coloring up to my eyes, "I *was* rather overtired, and couldn't get to rest, so I put the candle on a chair, took a book, and lay on the floor so as to have a light to read by. But I slept very well after the candle went out, thank you."

"There were none but French books in the room,

though," she said quickly: "perhaps you read French?"

"I read *Le Roi s'amuse*, or part of it," said I.

"Oh, what a dreadful play to read on Christmas Eve!" cried Lucretia, with a little deprecating gesture. "But you must come and have your breakfast."

I followed her into the dining-room, a pretty little bright-looking room behind the bar. Frightened as I was during the night, I could not fail to notice how tastefully the bedroom was furnished; but this little *salle-à-manger* was far prettier. The paper, the carpet, the furniture, were all models of what cheap and simple cottage decorations ought to be. They breathed of Lucretia. The Montreal nuns had evidently taught her what "art at home" meant. The table was laid, and the white table-cloth, with its bright silver, and sprays of evergreen in the vase, looked delightfully appetizing. I began to think I might manage a breakfast, after all.

"How pretty all your things are!" I said to Lucretia.

"Do you think so?" she answered. "I chose them, and I laid the table."

I looked surprised; but in a moment more I was fairly overwhelmed when Lucretia left the room for a minute, and then returned carrying a tray covered with dishes. These she rapidly and dexterously placed upon the table, and then asked me to take my seat.

"But," said I, hesitating, "am I to understand—You don't mean to say— Are you—going—to wait upon me?"

Lucretia's face was one smile of innocent amusement from her white little forehead to her chiselled little chin. "Why, yes," she answered, laughing, "of course I am! I always wait upon our guests when I'm at home. And I cooked these salmon cutlets, which I'm sure you'll find nice if you only try them while they're hot." With which recommendation she uncovered all the dishes, and displayed a breakfast that might have tempted St. Anthony. Not being St. Anthony, I can do Lucretia's breakfast the justice to say that I ate it with unfeigned heartiness.

So my princess was, after all, the domestic manager and assistant cook of a small country inn! Not a countess, not even a murderess (which is at least romantic), but only a prosaic housekeeper! Yet she *was* a princess, for all that. Did she not read Victor Hugo, and play "Lucrezia Borgia," and spread her own refinement over the village tavern? In no other country could you find such a strange mixture of culture and simplicity; but it was new, it was interesting, and it was piquant. Lucretia in her morning dress officiously insisting upon offering me the buckwheat pancakes with her own white hands was Lucretia still, and I fell deeper in love than ever.

After breakfast came a serious difficulty. I must go to the Pritchards, but before I went, I must pay. Yet, how was I to ask for my bill? I *couldn't* demand it of Lucretia. So I sat a while ruminating, and at last I said, "I wonder how people do when they want to leave this house!"

"Why," said Lucretia, promptly, "they order the sleigh!"

"Yes," I answered sheepishly, "no doubt. But how do they manage about paying?"

Lucretia smiled. She was so absolutely transparent, and so accustomed to her simple way of doing business, that I suppose she did not comprehend my difficulty. "They ask *me*, of course, and I tell them what they owe. You owe us half a dollar."

Half a dollar—two shillings sterling—for a night of romance and terror, a bed and bedroom, a regal breakfast, and—Lucretia to wait upon one! It was *too* ridiculous. And these were the good simple Canadian villagers whom I had suspected of wishing to rob and murder me! I never felt so ashamed of my own stupidity in the whole course of my life.

I must pay it somehow, I supposed, but I could not bear to hand over two shilling-pieces into Lucretia's outstretched palm. It was desecration, it was sheer sacrilege! But Lucretia took the half-dollar with the utmost calmness, and went out to order the sleigh.

I drove to the rector's, after saying good-by to Lucretia, with a clear determination that before I left Richmond she should have consented to become my wife. Of course there were social differences, but those would be forgotten in South Kensington, and nobody need ever know what Lucretia had been in Canada. Besides, she was fit to shine in the society of duchesses—a society into which I cannot honestly pretend that I habitually penetrate.

The rector and his wife gave me a hearty welcome, and I found Mrs. Pritchard a good motherly sort of body—just the right woman for helping on a romantic love-match. So, in the course of the morning, as we walked back from church, I managed to mention to her casually that a very nice young woman had come down in the train with me from Quebec.

"You don't mean Lucretia?" cried good Mrs. Pritchard.

"Lucretia," I answered, in a cold sort of way, "I think that *was* her name. In fact, I remember she told me so."

"Oh, yes, everybody calls her Lucretia—indeed, she's hardly got any other name. She's the dearest creature in the world, as simple as a child, yet the most engaging and kind-hearted girl you ever met. She was brought up by some nuns at Montreal, and being a very clever girl, with a great deal of taste, she was their favorite pupil, and has turned out a most cultivated person."

"Does she paint?" I asked, thinking of the Beatrice.

"Oh, beautifully! Her ivory miniatures always take prizes at the Toronto Exhibition. And she plays and sings charmingly."

"Are they well off?"

"Very, for Canadians. Lucretia has money of her own, and they have a good farm, besides the hotel."

"She said she knew you very well," I ventured to suggest.

"Oh, yes! she's coming here this evening. We have an early dinner—you know our simple Canadian habits—and a few friends will drop in to high tea after

evening service. She and Tom will be among them—you met Tom, of course?"

"I had the pleasure of making Tom's acquaintance at 1 o'clock this morning," I answered. "But, excuse my asking it, isn't it a little odd for you to mix with people in their position?"

The rector smiled and put in his word. "This is a democratic country," he said; "a mere farmer community, after all. We have little society in Richmond, and are very glad to know such pleasant, intelligent people as Tom and Lucretia."

"But, then, the *convenances*," I urged, secretly desiring to have my own position strengthened. "When I got to the hotel last night, or rather this morning, there were a lot of rough-looking hulking fellows drinking whiskey and playing cards."

"Ah, I dare say! Old Picard, and young Le Patourel from Melbourne, and the post-office people, sitting over a quiet game of *écarté* while they waited for the last train. The English mail was in last night. As for the whiskey, that's the custom of the country. We Canadians do nothing without whiskey. A single glass of Morton's proof does nobody any harm."

And these were my robbers and gamblers! A party of peaceable farmers and sleepy post officials, sitting up with a sober glass of toddy and beguiling the time with *écarté* for love, in expectation of Her Majesty's mails. I shall never again go to bed with a poker by my side as long as I live.

About 7 o'clock our friends came in. Lucretia was one, more charming this time in a long evening dress, a peach-colored silk with square-cut bodice, and a little lace cap on her black hair. I dare say I saw almost the full extent of her wardrobe in those three changes; but the impression she produced upon me was still that of boundless wealth. However, as she had money of her own, I no longer wondered at the richness of her toilet, and I reflected that a comfortable little settlement might help to outweigh any possible prejudice on my mother's part.

Lucretia was the soul of the evening. She talked, she flirted innocently with every man in the room (myself included), she played divinely, and she sang that very song from "Lucrezia Borgia" in a rich contralto voice. As she rose at last from the piano, I could contain myself no longer. I must find some opportunity of proposing to her there and then. I edged my way to the little group where she was standing, flushed with the compliments on her song, talking to our hostess near the piano. As I approached from behind, I could hear that they were speaking about me, and I caught a few words distinctly. I paused to listen. It was very wrong, but twenty is an impulsive age.

"Oh, a very nice young man indeed!" Lucretia was saying; "and we had a most enjoyable journey down. He talked so simply, and seemed such an innocent boy, so I took quite a fancy to him." (My heart beat about two hundred pulsations to the minute.) "Such a clever, intelligent talker too, full of wide English views and interests, so different from our narrow, provincial Canadian lads!" (Oh, Lucretia, I feel sure of you now! Love at first sight on both sides, evidently!) "And then he spoke to me so nicely about his mother! I was quite grieved to think he should be travelling alone on Christmas Eve, and so pleased when I heard he was to spend his holidays with you, dear. I thought what I should have felt if——"

I listened with all my ears. What could Lucretia be going to say?

"If *one of my own dear boys was grown up*, and passing the holidays alone in a strange land!"

I reeled. The room swam before me. It was too awful! So all that Lucretia had ever felt was a mere motherly interest in me as a solitary English boy away from his domestic turkey! Terrible, hideous, blighting fact! Lucretia was married!

The rector's refreshments in the adjoining dining-room only went to the length of sponge-cake and weak claret-cup. I managed to get away from the piano without fainting, and swallowed about a quart of the

intoxicating beverage by tumblerfuls. When I had recovered sufficiently from the shock to trust my tongue, I ventured back into the drawing-room. It struck me then that I had never yet heard Lucretia's surname. When she and her brother arrived in the early part of the evening, Mrs. Pritchard had simply introduced them to me by saying, "I think you know Tom and Lucretia already!" Colonial manners are *so* unceremonious!

I joined the fatal group once more. "Do you know," I said, addressing Lucretia with as little tremor in my voice as I could easily manage, "it's very curious, but I have never heard your surname yet!"

"Dear me," cried Lucretia, "I quite forgot! Our name is Arundel."

"And which is Mr. Arundel?" I continued. "I should like to make his acquaintance."

"Why," answered Lucretia with a puzzled expression of face, "you've met him already. Here he is!" And she took a neighboring young man in unimpeachable evening dress gently by the arm. He turned round. It required a moment's consideration to recognize in that tall and gentlemanly young fellow with the plain gold studs and turn-down collar my rough acquaintance of last night—Tom himself!

I saw it in a flash. What a fool I had been! I might have known they were husband and wife. Nothing but a pure piece of infatuated preconception could ever have made me take them for brother and sister. But I had so fully determined in my own mind to win Lucretia for myself that the notion of any other fellow having already secured the prize had never struck me.

It was all the fault of that incomprehensible Canadian society, with its foolish removal of the natural barriers between classes. My mother was quite right. I should henceforth be a high-and-dry conservative in all matters matrimonial, return home in the spring with heart completely healed, and after passing correctly through a London season, marry the daughter of a general or a Warwickshire squire, with the full consent of all the

high contracting parties, at St. George's, Hanover Square. With this noble and moral resolution firmly planted in my bosom, I made my excuses to the rector and his good little wife, and left Richmond forever the very next morning, without even seeing Lucretia once again.

But, somehow, I have never quite forgotten that journey from Quebec on Christmas Eve; and though I have passed through several London seasons since that date, and undergone increasingly active sieges from mammas and daughters, as my briefs on the Oxford Circuit grow more and more numerous, I still remain a bachelor, with solitary chambers in St. James'. I sometimes fancy it might have been otherwise if I could only once have met a second paragon exactly like Lucretia.

The burglar in the following story by Guy de Maupassant, translated for ROMANCE by M. E. B., was not treated quite as kindly as little Editha treated hers; but he might have fallen into far worse hands than those of these rollicking artists. Query: In a more highly-civilized state of society, how will burglars be treated—since the tendency is constantly to ameliorate the condition of criminals?

THE ROBBER.

I.

"WHEN I tell you, you will not believe me."

"Never mind; tell us, all the same."

"Willingly, but I feel the necessity of first declaring that my story is true in every particular, improbable as it seems. Artists alone will not be surprised, particularly those who lived in that period when the spirit of fun and frolic pervaded artist life, even in the most serious circumstances."

This conversation took place in the *salle-à-manger* of the Hotel de Barbison, among a lot of students.

The old artist who had just spoken placed himself astride his chair, and continued:

II.

Well, we had dined that evening with Sorieul. Poor fellow, he is now dead! There were only three of us, Sorieul, Le Poittevin, and myself. Sorieul was the wildest of us all, and to say we had dined at his house signifies—we were all drunk. Le Poittevin alone retained his senses—a little cloudy, it is true; still he knew what he was doing. Ah! we were young, in those days.

Lying on the carpet in a little room adjoining the atelier, we discussed in the most extravagant manner all kinds of improbable things.

Sorieul, flat on his back, his feet perched on the back of a chair, talked about battles and the uniforms worn

during the Empire. Suddenly getting up, he went to a large wardrobe and took down a complete suit of Hussar uniform, dressed himself in it, then tried to persuade Le Poittevin to costume himself as a Grenadier. When he resisted we seized him, undressed him, and forced him into an immense uniform which completely swallowed him up.

I disguised myself as a Cuirassier, and Sorieul made us execute some very complicated manœuvres.

Then he exclaimed, "As we are now soldiers, we must drink like soldiers!"

A punch was lighted, swallowed; again and again the flames rose up from the bowl of rum. We sang the old songs which the troopers of the Grand Army sang in ancient times.

Suddenly Le Poittevin, who in spite of all this was still master of himself, made us a sign to be silent; after listening a moment, he said, in a low voice, "I am sure I hear some one walking in the atelier!"

Sorieul got up as well as he could, and cried out: "A robber! what luck!" and began to troll the Marseillaise, "To arms! To arms, ye brave!"

We dashed to a panoply of arms and equipped ourselves according to our uniforms. I had a kind of musket, with a sabre; Le Poittevin a gigantic gun with a bayonet; Sorieul, not finding what he wanted, seized a horse-pistol, which he stuck in his belt, and a boarding-axe, which he wildly brandished. Then cautiously opening the door of the atelier, the army entered the suspected territory.

When we were in the midst of this vast room, encumbered with easels, pictures, and strange, unexpected objects of furniture, Sorieul called a halt and said: "I constitute myself General. Let us hold a council of war. You Cuirassiers, go and cut off the retreat of the enemy, that is, 'Lock the door.' You Grenadiers will be my escort."

I executed the commanded movement, then joined the troop that formed the reconnoitring party.

I was searching behind a great screen, a lighted

candle in my hand, when a furious noise burst forth. I darted out to find Le Poittevin had stuck his bayonet into the breast of a lay figure, and Sorieul was trying to cut off the head with his axe.

The mistake being recognized, the General commanded, "Be more prudent!" and again we commenced operations.

For twenty minutes at least we ransacked every corner and crevice of the atelier, without success. At last Le Poittevin thought of opening a large closet. It was dark and deep. I thrust in my arm, holding the light, but quickly recoiled; a man—a living, breathing man—was there, looking at me!

I immediately shut the door and secured it by two turns of the key; then we held a new council of war.

Opinions were very much divided. Sorieul wanted to smoke out the robber, Le Poittevin to take him by famine; I proposed to blow him up with powder.

The advice of Le Poittevin prevailed. While he mounted guard with his gigantic gun, we ran off for the remainder of the punch and our pipes; when we installed ourselves before the locked door and drank to the health of the prisoner.

At the end of half an hour Sorieul said: "All the same, I would like to see him nearer! Suppose we take him by force!"

I cried, "Bravo!" Each one dashed to his arms, the closet door was opened, Sorieul cocking his pistol—which was not loaded—was the first to rush in, we followed, howling and yelling; it was an awful scrimmage in the dark, and after five minutes of frightful struggling we brought out an old, dirty, ragged-looking beggar with long white hair.

We bound him hand and foot and proceeded to question him. He would not answer a word.

Then Sorieul, full of dignified drunkenness, said: "We must try this man, and pass sentence upon him." I was so drunk the proposition seemed perfectly natural to me. Le Poittevin was charged with the defence, and I to sustain the accusation. He was condemned to

death; only one dissenting voice, that of his defender. We were going to execute the sentence, when a serious scruple came to Sorieul. He said: "This man ought not to die without the consolation of religion. Some one must go for a priest."

I objected—said it was too late. Then Sorieul proposed that I should fill that office, and I exhorted the criminal to unburden his sins into my bosom.

The poor old wretch had been rolling his frightened eyes for about five minutes, no doubt wondering what kind of madmen he had fallen into the hands of. You will laugh when I tell you Sorieul forced him down upon his knees, saying, "Confess to this gentleman, for thy last hour has come!"

Horribly frightened, the old scoundrel began to cry "Help! help!" with such strength and vigor we were forced to gag him for fear he would arouse the neighbors. Then he rolled over the floor, turning, twisting, upsetting the easels, pictures, canvases, until Sorieul got out of patience and angrily exclaimed, "Come, let us finish him!" With that he put his pistol to the head of the miserable wretch, and pulled the trigger.

Carried away by his example, I fired in my turn. My musket was an old flint-lock, and sent forth a tiny spark, to my great surprise.

Then Le Poittevin said, in grave tones, "Have we the right to kill this man?"

Sorieul in great astonishment cried out: "Certainly, when we have condemned him to death!"

"But," continued Le Poittevin, "they don't shoot civilians. They are always hanged. We must take this one to the police-station."

This argument appeared conclusive.

We picked up the old fellow—he would not walk a step—bound him securely to a plank taken from the model-table, and carried him, Le Poittevin at the head, I at the foot, while Sorieul, armed to the teeth, closed the line of march.

When we reached the station-house, the sentinel arrested us. The Chief of Police was sent for. He knew

us well, nearly every day witnessing some of our jokes, pranks, and unheard-of capers. He refused to receive our prisoner.

Sorieul insisted; then the officer severely invited us to return home and make no more noise.

The troop again took up the line of march and returned to the atelier.

"What are we going to do with this old robber?" I asked.

Le Poittevin, touched with tender pity, declared he looked terribly exhausted. Truly the old fellow had an agonizing appearance, gagged, tied hand and foot, and securely bound to his plank.

I was taken in my turn with violent pity. I took off his gag and said: "Well, my poor old man, how do you feel now?" He groaned, "In the name of God, I've had enough!"

Then Sorieul became affectionately paternal. He untied him, placed him in an arm-chair, fondled him, calling him "thee" and "thou." And to comfort him, we all three ran off to make him a fresh punch. The old scamp, tranquilly seated in his arm-chair, coolly regarded us.

When the punch was ready, we touched glasses with him, "wishing him long life and prosperity."

Our prisoner drank as much as a regiment, and when daylight appeared, he got up and said, "I am sorry to leave you, gentlemen, but I must go."

We were desolate, heart-broken, begged him to stay, but he would remain no longer. Then we followed him to the door, shook hands with him; Sorieul lighted him through the vestibule, and called out, "Take care, my old friend, there's a bad step there! don't fall!"

A hearty laugh followed this ridiculous story of the old artist, who got up, lighted his pipe, and standing in front of us, added:

"The drollest part of my story, gentlemen, is this: Every word of it is true!"

It is a fact in medical science that a disturbance set up in one part of the body may make itself apparent in an entirely different part. The same thing is often more subtly observed. In this story the lady thought her soul was involved; it proved to be only her heart. But the remedy was at hand, and how successfully it was applied is related by the author of "Adonais Q. C."

MISS JOLLIBERT'S PROPOSAL.

It was really quite a pretty sight to see handsome Miss Jollibert, in her handsome blue silk dress, and seated in her handsome blue barouche, and with her handsome blue-liveried servants and handsome blue-gray horses, drive forth under the shadow of her azure parasol upon a smiling summer's day. She generally looked straight before her, between the horses' heads; *she* didn't turn aside to recognize everybody. She had a little way of drawing herself up and sighing "Hum," like a genuine bee, which was enough to make the most impertinent heart quail. Nevertheless, when Miss Jollibert liked, she could smile out of her deep brown eyes to this side and to that, too, not a little sweetly. It was a marvel to all the world why she persisted in remaining Miss Jollibert. When the weather was rainy, a dark red carriage, with scarlet wheels, was substituted for the open barouche. When it snowed again, she spun away over the sparkling surface, her sleigh a heterogeneous but artistic confusion of sealskin, sable-tail, and ermine, herself a study in peacock-blue.

When it snowed. It was snowing very hard one winter's night when Miss Jollibert sat alone before her drawing-room fire. It was a magnificent fire, and the drawing-room was simply a blaze of magnificence, and Miss Jollibert was indeed magnificent in diamonds and a rose-colored velvet dress—so bright that it made her perhaps too brilliant complexion look quite pale in comparison; as probably she knew. Everything, from the superb Eastern knick-knacks in the brackets to the

hot-house flowers on the tables, spoke of wealth. You looked at all parts of the room, and you said, "What expenditure!" Then you looked at Miss Jollibert herself, and repeated, "What expenditure!" more emphatically than before. And if you were a sensitive person of quick thought, you added to yourself: "How would a poor man feel in this room?"

Miss Jollibert, at all events, appeared to feel very comfortable. Her diamonds flashed in the firelight, as she lay back in a luxurious arm-chair and toyed with the folds of her rose-colored velvet. The people of Malchester said it was ridiculous Miss Jollibert should dress herself up in rose-colored velvet and diamonds when she was alone, for the simple pleasure of seeing the firelight flash on them. Miss Jollibert, however, cared little what any one said, and at all events she was looking superbly handsome.

A clock on the mantelpiece struck the hour of eight; and a minute after, eight tolled forth from a neighboring steeple, and was borne to Miss Jollibert's window with a gust of drifting snow. She shivered at the sound of the snow, leaned forward and poked the fire; then turned and settled the various pieces of the little tea service on the low table beside her. She went over them all. A cream-pot, a slop-bowl, a sugar-basin, and two teacups. She examined the two teacups particularly; little priceless trinkets they were. She put them down, and examined her own beautiful hands—they *were* beautiful hands. Then she removed the little toast-rack on the table down to the fire; after which she fell into a profound reverie until a quarter past eight, when she roused herself once more, and rang the bell.

An instant after, a servant, dressed in black, appeared at the door.

"James," asked she, in a peculiarly musical contralto voice, "did you deliver my note to the bishop?—You did?—And waited for the answer?—What was the exact message given to you?"

"His lordship sent his compliments, if you please 'm,

and he would be happy to be at Miss Jollibert's by five minutes to eight precisely."

"Hum," sighed Miss Jollibert.

Just as Miss Jollibert sighed "Hum," a tall man, some years turned forty, was stamping his feet free from snow downstairs in the hall. Seen by the flickering lamplight, he looked a very pale and rather gaunt student; but when he passed on up into the brilliancy of the staircase, his clear-cut features lost their gauntness; and one noted the striking intellect of his large, white brow, and the limpid beauty of his rather dreamy eyes. When the door opened, he smiled straight over at the rose-colored velvet figure, and advanced, holding out his hand and saying very sweetly:

"I'm sorry I'm late, Miss Jollibert."

She did not speak until she had poured tea into two teacups, and seated herself with her own in the arm-chair which she had before occupied.

"I dare say you were rather surprised when you had my note this afternoon, bishop?"

He stirred his tea slowly, looking at her, and smiling again.

"I was curious to know what could be the important matter that was troubling Miss Jollibert's mind; and I was glad, very glad, to think perhaps I was going to be of some use to my old friend, Miss Jollibert."

She played with her diamond rings a little nervously, and, turning her head, looked into the fire.

"An old friend; yes, so you are. You seem to have been an old friend all my life. I cannot remember the time when I did not know you. I know that other people call me foolish and vain behind my back, and somehow or other, I know that you never do. Would you rather that I told you now what is upon my mind—or would you rather wait a little?"

Stretching up, he settled the little teacup carefully among the Sèvres china on the mantelpiece; and, crossing his legs, folded his white hands composedly on his apron.

"I should wish you to tell me all about it at once,

Marion. Why delay anything you may have to say?"

She hesitated an instant longer, the firelight playing round her heavy eyelashes. "The long and the short of the thing is this," she said; "or rather this is what might be called the short of it, and the long will come after. I have made up my mind to go over to Rome."

The bishop uncrossed his legs with a sudden movement, and stared at Miss Jollibert. After an instant's pause, he raised himself once more, and brought his teacup carefully down from the mantelpiece again. "My dear," said he, "could I trouble you for just a *leetle* more sugar; just the *le—east* thing? Thank you, thank you. Ah!" The "ah" was more in the way of a sigh than an interjection; and with it he half closed one eye, and minutely inspected with the other the morsel of currant bun he was engaged in eating. There was something in the action which appeared to irritate Miss Jollibert slightly, for she pushed her chair back from the fire, and asked him very quickly: "Did your lordship not hear me?"

He finished the currant bun, and folded his hands composedly again.

"So," repeated he, "you have quite made up your mind to go over to Rome?"

"Quite," said Miss Jollibert; and after an instant's pause, unbroken except for the crackling of the flames, she added "*Quite*," again.

"Why?" asked the bishop quickly.

"On account of my convictions," replied Miss Jollibert, still more quickly.

"Ah!" sighed the bishop once more. His lordship passed his hand slowly all over his heavy masses of flaxen hair. Miss Jollibert fastened her large brown eyes upon him rather mournfully, and after a minute began to talk.

"Of course it has taken me a long time to make up my mind about this; and, of course, I am very sorry. I have studied Butler, and Jeremy Taylor, and Luther's treatises, and Manning, and Newman. I have fought

against my convictions as I never fought against anything before; and yet, in spite of myself, as it were, I have been converted. Of course, I am very sorry that it should be so. In a case like this, however, I think that one is not, perhaps, entirely responsible for one's own conversion."

The bishop inspected the side of his handsome foot, and settling himself yet a little more comfortably, nodded with much benevolence. "Quite so, quite so; very possibly not, my dear."

Miss Jollibert flushed slightly.

"No," she resumed with some warmth. "Why, of course you must know yourself, bishop, that most ancient theologians, and *all* prophets, foretold the foundation of one permanent and apostolic Church. I don't suppose that even the Bishop of Malchester would care to assert that Church to be the Church of England."

Henry Hammersley, Bishop of Malchester, took a long sip of his tea, and turning his limpid blue eyes round upon Miss Jollibert, smiled. "My dear," said he gently, "I always feel very diffident about making any assertions."

"Well—but I don't," pursued she, with a slight tremor in her voice. "Just think what it is for me to be convinced, firmly convinced, in my mind, of there being no English Church, no English rites, no English orders to be relied upon."

"O—h!" said he, wheeling sharp round, and snatching another little bit of currant bun from the plate. "So I'm not a bishop?"

"No," cried Miss Jollibert, half angrily and half in laughter; "at least, I don't think so. I am very sorry, but I can't make up my mind that you are. I am very sorry to say such things. Don't be angry with me, bishop."

He stretched his hand out for the little poker, and gave a sharp tap to a bit of coal which sent it rattling noisily down upon the painted tiles. "I beg your pardon, my dear," said he ruefully. "I ought never to have meddled with the fire, you see—just as you ought

never to have meddled with the theologians. Hand me the tongs, Marion."

She did as he asked her, a rush of tears coming into her dark eyes. "It is of no use to talk to me in that way; no use saying anything, since I have quite made up my mind. And besides that," she added, after a slight pause, with her eyes fixed anxiously upon the back of the bishop's fair head, just then within dangerous proximity to the grate, "I have quite made up my mind that I'm going to dispose of my house, and my horses, and my furniture, and everything; and immediately after I have collected the money, I shall go into a convent and take the veil."

He put the tongs carefully down on the fender; and sticking two of his long white fingers into Miss Jollibert's sugar-basin, brought out a little pointed lump, and balanced it dreamily in the air.

"Ah," sighed he again.

Miss Jollibert pushed her chair back abruptly, and stood before him. "Why do you only answer 'ah,' like that? I asked you here to help me, because you always used to help me with things; and now you only answer 'ah.'" Then, turning suddenly away, she crossed both hands upon the mantelpiece, and leaned her head down upon them. "Oh, don't you see what it is? Don't you understand? What is the use of a carriage and horses, and furniture, and wealth like mine? What is the use of life? I want to *do* something. I want to live."

The bishop rose. He drew one of her hands gently from her face, and closed his own over it. "I understand," he said huskily, and looked straight into the fire.

The snow rattled against the window, and the wind howled around the corner of the square. He leaned one elbow on the gold-colored plush, and rested his fair head on it. He was a very young man, this, to be a bishop. There was scarcely a silver thread mingled with the glistening masses. Miss Jollibert, too, as she stood in the firelight, looked the perfection of a well-built, handsome-featured woman. It would have

seemed as if the weight of her hand oppressed the bishop, for he breathed very hard as he stood there holding it, Miss Jollibert's moist eyes staring pensively the while into the distant half-gloom of the ante-chamber.

After a long pause some thought appeared suddenly to strike him, for with an abrupt movement he drew his hand away; and, walking across to the other side of the fire, ostentatiously put up his doubled eyeglass to examine a little Alma Tadema upon the opposite wall.

"Don't confuse your convictions with your inclinations," he began. "(Your father had that picture in a much better light than you have, Marion.) As you say, *do* something, but don't let your inclination to *do* something interfere with your convictions. (If you were to shorten the string it might be better.) Why not become a doctor?"

"A doctor!" ejaculated she, dazedly.

"Yes," he continued, working with the string of the picture in an abstracted fashion. "Or a lawyer; there would be a great path of usefulness open to you. I *have* heard of lady solicitors—and you might step into your Uncle Matthew's practice. I dare say there will be lady barristers and lady ministers by and by. Why, my dear, you might even become a bishop! In Tadema's pictures detail, and detail alone——"

"Bishop," interrupted Miss Jollibert, in a preternaturally calm tone, "my convictions interfere in no way with my desire to *do* something. My convictions are, of course, the result of conversion."

"Who converted you?" inquired he, still with his back to her, and passing rapidly to another picture. "Was it the ancient theologians or the prophets? Well, Marion, you have asked my advice. Shall I tell you, then, what I think you ought to do with your life? I shall soon be growing an old man, and I *am* a very old friend, so I may be privileged to say what I choose. I think you ought to marry."

She answered nothing for a moment; then, moving slowly beside him, began to converse about the pictures

and their various merits and demerits, in an easy, conversational manner, which was surprising in itself, considering the suppressed emotion of her voice hardly a minute ago. The bishop turned quickly round, and, closing his eyeglass with a sharp click, stood looking at her. Just as she was beginning to enlarge upon the beauties of a certain Holy Family she had seen at St. Petersburg, he walked straight back to the mantelpiece, and leaning his face on his hand again, interrupted her without ceremony.

"Marion," he said gravely, "I thought you wanted me to help you."

Her eyes lit up, and she answered quickly with all the emotion in her voice again: "Yes, and when I ask you to do so, when I tell you seriously that I have made up my mind to go into a convent and take the veil, you reply by treating the whole thing as a joke, and advising me—to marry! This is not what I expected from you."

He stood beside her in a moment, his whole manner changing. "I never supposed that it was," he said. "I never supposed that it was what you expected. Nevertheless, Marion, it is my advice, and I repeat it to you. I think you ought to marry."

She looked at him for a minute longer, her expression varying between surprise and impatience. "What do you mean?" she asked. "*I* repeat that you are treating the whole thing as a joke; and that I think that it is very unkind of you to do so. *Marry!* that is a proof in itself that you are laughing at me. Marry whom?"

Turning swiftly away, he took a rapid turn up and down the room; then, halting beside the tea table, began to finger nervously with the dainty tea service.

"I'm sure I don't know how to say it to you," he hesitated almost tearfully. "I know so well that you have never suspected anything; and I have been so much afraid of startling you; and I have been so ridiculous. But if I might dare, that is—if you would allow me—Marion," he cried, with a sudden movement of his arm, which upset the sugar-basin, and sent a shower of knots pattering over the floor, "I would say—*Marry me.*"

As for the people of Malchester, they declared they couldn't have believed it, either of Miss Jollibert or the bishop. Half of them said *especially* of Miss Jollibert; and the other half *particularly* of the bishop. There were no very definite rumors afloat until one evening when the bishop went out to dine with a friend, and after dinner told a little humorous story in his own humorous way.

Two days later there were upward of ninety distinct reports of this story, the least wild of which was that the bishop had tried to persuade Miss Jollibert to imprison herself in a convent, but that she had replied no, she would sooner marry him than that; and so, from one thing to another, they were to be married. As to the hitch in this version, namely, why in the name of wonder the bishop could want Miss Jollibert to imprison herself in a convent, a lady of the Baptist persuasion soon filled that up. She discovered that the bishop and Miss Jollibert were in the habit of playing cards together of an evening—*playing cards*—bézique, or some such game; that was to say, of course, equivalent to *gambling*. So by the end of the week it was widely current throughout Malchester that the bishop was encumbered with heavy gambling debts, which were about to be liquidated by Miss Jollibert.

At the very height of all this, the bishop's fair head and shiny black coat appeared for the first time in the blue barouche, *vis-à-vis* to Miss Jollibert. It was a sunshiny day, and the bishop was noticed to be laughing. It very often requires only a straw or a pin-point to change insanity to sanity, unpopularity to popularity, ferocity to mildness. In this case the bishop's laugh was the symbolical pin-point. Next morning the heavy clouds of suspicion had rolled away and the blue sky shone again. Next morning all Malchester was laughing and smiling with the bishop.

There was one great mercy, and Miss Jollibert remarked it herself. Putting the fiction of gambling and other ridiculous debts aside, no one could say she was being married for her money. The bishop's purple

brougham was fully a match for Miss Jollibert's barouche; and his high-stepping bays would have kept pace any day with the blue-gray horses. The palace stood in an unfashionable end of the town, it is true; but it was a grand old brown building, with long, terraced gardens sloping away down to the river; aged trees, and huge clusters of scarlet geranium, turning them in summer into a paradise.

Sometimes Miss Jollibert would go out to drive with the bishop and the bishop's sister, Miss Hammersley, a tiny, silver-haired lady; and on such evenings the curious passers-by on the river would catch a glimpse of rose-colored velvet and a black coat here; and a glimmer of gray satin and silver hair and knitting pins up there under the portico. On such evenings Miss Jollibert was very happy.

Once or twice before the wedding there were grand entertainments. Other and older bishops, grave deans, ambitious canons, and many other mighty men paced two and two amid the singing of the birds, and the red sunsets, and the distant sound of splashing oars on the river. Miss Jollibert had great waves of trouble—doubts as to her convictions and conversions—sweep over her then; and she half regretted her grand sacrifice and her quiet convent. And when such phrases as "the ancient traditions of the Church," as "the legitimacy of the apostolic succession," came upon her unawares round the drooping laburnum, she was often upon the point of declaring boldly and outright that they had nothing to do with the ancient traditions or the apostolic succession. But she managed to content herself with sighing, "Hum;" and with relieving her mind on the matter as soon as she found herself alone with her own bishop. He invariably laughed very much, and said: "I wish—I wish you had told them your thoughts;" and then sighed a long "ah," his dreamy blue eyes looking steadfastly up into the blue, darkening heavens. He looked so well like with the rising moonlight playing about his pale brow, that poor human Miss Jollibert felt her convictions quivering and

wavering in a way which she might have laid hold of as a possible argument in itself against a fallible rule, if she had only known it. But she simply put her white hand upon the bishop's arm and whispered:

"Of course you know best."

So time passed on. Just as early summer was changing into late summer, a great illness broke out over the country. It was exactly at this time that the bishop and Miss Jollibert had intended to be joined; but they put off the ceremony for a time, and clasping hands figuratively—since duty forbade them to do so in reality—they set boldly to work. So all through the long, hot days, and very often far into the stifling nights, the blue barouche and the purple brougham rolled about Malchester.

Sometimes it would happen that the two crossed each other at the turn of a street, at the corner of a square, and the bishop would lift his hat, calling out laughingly: "How do you do, Marion? Ninety degrees in the shade to-day." And she would nod back with a smile: "Quite well, thank you, bishop. I wonder what it is in the sunshine?"

After the illness was in a great measure abated, just as the hazy cornfields were beginning to turn to gold, just then, Miss Jollibert awoke one morning to find a great peace at her heart, and that her convictions had forever fallen asleep. Strangely enough, it was the morning of her wedding-day.

At Miss Jollibert's wedding, there was not one being who had the heart, or the audacity, to say she was anything but a very handsome woman; and that the bishop and she were a very lucky pair. Most of them added *particularly* the bishop; but if some of them did say instead *especially* Miss Jollibert, it was not to be supposed that a slight was intended upon Miss Jollibert in any way. The very first flakes of snow that came down that winter fell fair upon the Lord Bishop of Malchester and Mrs. Hammersley.

Although the wooing of women with the fists and by feats of physical prowess is no longer considered good form in polite circles, this account will be sympathetically received, since it was written by Björnstjerne Björnson, the Norwgeian poet. It is here reprinted from *The Strand.*

A PERILOUS WOOING.

From the time that Aslang was quite grown up there was no longer any peace or quiet at Husaby. In fact, all the handsomest young fellows in the village did nothing but fight and quarrel night after night, and it was always worse on Saturday nights. Aslang's father, old Canute Husaby, never went to bed on those nights without keeping on at least his leather breeches and laying a good stout birch stick on the bed beside him. "If I have such a pretty daughter," said old Canute, "I must know how to take care of her."

Thor Nesset was only the son of a poor cottager, and yet folks said that it was he who went oftenest to visit the farmer's daughter at Husaby. Of course, old Canute was not pleased to hear this. He said it was not true; that, at any rate, he had never seen him there. Still they smiled and whispered to each other that if he only had thoroughly searched the hay-loft, whither Aslang had many an errand, he would have found Thor there.

Spring came, and Aslang went up the mountain with the cattle. And now, when the heat of the day hung over the valley, the rocks rose cool and clear through the sun's misty rays, the cow-bells tinkled, the shepherd's dog barked, Aslang sang her "jodel" songs and blew the cow-horn, all the young men felt their hearts grow sore and heavy as they gazed upon her beauty. And on the first Saturday evening one after the other they crept up the hill. But they came down again quicker than they had gone up, for at the top stood a man who kept guard, receiving each one who came up

with such a warm reception that he all his life long remembered the words that accompanied the action, "Come up here again and there will be still more in store for you!"

All the young fellows could arrive but at one conclusion, that there was only one man in the whole parish who had such fists, and that man was Thor Nesset. All the rich farmers' daughters thought it was too bad that this cottager's son should stand highest in Aslang Husaby's favor.

Old Canute thought the same when he heard about it all, and said that if there were no one else who could check him he would do it himself. Now, Canute was certainly getting on in years; still, although he was past sixty, he often enjoyed a good wrestling match with his eldest son whenever time in-doors fell heavy on his hands.

There was but one path up to the mountain belonging to Husaby, and it went straight through the farm garden. Next Saturday evening, as Thor was on his way to the mountain, creeping carefully across the yard, hurrying as soon as he was well past the farm buildings, a man suddenly rushed at him.

"What do you want with me?" asked Thor, and hit him such a blow in the face that sparks danced before his eyes.

"You will soon learn that," said some one else behind him, and gave him a great blow in the back of his neck. That was Aslang's brother.

"And here's the hired man," said old Canute, and attacked him also.

The greater the danger the greater was Thor's strength. He was supple as a willow, and hit out right manfully; he dived and he ducked; whenever a blow fell it missed him, and when none expected it he would deal a good one. He stooped down, he sprang on one side, but for all that he got a terrible thrashing. Old Canute said afterward that "he had never fought with a braver fellow." They kept it up till blood began to flow, then Canute cried out, "Stop!" Then he

added in a croaking tone, "If you can get up here next Saturday, in spite of Canute Husaby and his men, the girl shall be yours!"

Thor dragged himself home as best he could, and when he reached the cottage went straight to bed. There was a great deal of talk about the fight up on Husaby hill, but every one said, "Why did he go there?" Only one person did not say so, and that was Aslang. She had been expecting Thor that Saturday evening, but when she heard what had happened between him and her father, she sat down and cried bitterly, and said to herself, "If I may not have Thor I shall never have a happy day again in this world."

Thor stayed in his bed all Sunday, and when Monday came he felt he must stay on where he was. Tuesday came, and it was a lovely day. It had rained in the night; the hills looked so fresh and green, the window was open, sweet odors were wafted in, the cow-bells were tinkling on the mountain, and far up above some one was "jodling." Truly, if it had not been for his mother, who was sitting in the room, he could have cried. Wednesday came, and still he stayed in bed; on Thursday, though, he began to think about the possibility of being well again by Saturday, and Friday found him on his legs again. Then he thought of what Aslang's father had said, "If you can get up to her next Saturday without being stopped by Canute and his men the girl shall be yours." Over and over again he looked up at Husaby farm. "I shall never see another Christmas," thought Thor.

As before mentioned, there was but one path up to Husaby hill; but surely any strong, able fellow must be able to get to it, even though the direct way were barred to him. For instance, if he were to row round the point yonder and fasten his boat at the one side, it might be possible to climb up there, although it was so very steep that the goats had great difficulty in climbing it, and they are not usually afraid of mountain work.

Saturday came, and Thor went out early in the morning. The day was most beautiful; the sun shone so

brightly that the very bushes seemed alive. Up on the mountain many voices were "jodling," and there was much blowing of horns. When evening came he was sitting at his cottage door watching the steaming mist rise up on the hills. He looked upward—all was quiet; he looked over toward Husaby farm—and then he jumped into his boat and rowed away round the point.

Aslang sat before the hut; her day's work was done; she was thinking Thor would not come that evening, and that therefore many others might come instead, so she unfastened the dog, and, without saying anything, walked farther on. She sat down, so that she could see across the valley, but the mist was rising there, and prevented her looking down. Then she chose another place, and without thinking more about it, sat down so that she looked toward the side where lay the fjord. It seemed to bring peace to her soul when she could gaze far away across the water.

As she sat there the fancy struck her that she was inclined to sing, so she chose a song with "long-drawn notes," and far and wide it sounded through the mountains. She liked to hear herself sing, so she began over again when the first verse was ended. But when she had sung the second, it seemed to her as though some one answered from far down below. "Dear me, what can that be?" thought Aslang. She stepped forward to the edge and twined her arms around a slender birch which hung trembling over the precipice, and looked down. But she could see nothing; the fjord lay there calm and at rest; not a single bird skimmed the water. So Aslang sat herself down again, and again she began to sing. Once more came the answering voice in the same tones and nearer than the first time. "That sound was no echo, whatever it may be." Aslang jumped to her feet and again leaned over the cliff. And there down below, at the foot of the rocky wall, she saw a boat fastened. It looked like a tiny nutshell, for it was very far down. She looked again and saw a fur cap, and under it the figure of a man, climbing up the steep and barren cliff.

"Who can it be?" Aslang asked herself; and letting go the birch she stepped back. She dared not answer her own question, but well she knew who it was. She flung herself down on the greensward, seizing the grass with both hands, as though it were she who dared not loose her hold for fear of falling. But the grass came up by the roots; she screamed aloud and dug her hands deeper and deeper into the soil. She prayed to God to help him; but then it struck her that this feat of Thor's would be called "tempting Providence," and therefore he could not expect help from above.

"Only just this once!" she prayed. "Hear my prayer just this one time, and help him!" Then she threw her arms round the dog, as though it were Thor whom she was clasping, and rolled herself on the grass beside it.

The time seemed to her quite endless.

Suddenly the dog began to bark. "Bow-wow!" said he to Aslang, and jumped upon her. And again, "Wow-wow!" Then over the edge of the cliff a coarse, round cap came to view, and—Thor was in her arms!

He lay there a whole minute, and neither of them was capable of uttering a syllable. And when they did begin to talk there was neither sense nor reason in anything they said.

But when old Canute Husaby heard of it he uttered a remark which had both sense and reason. Bringing his fist down on the table with a tremendous crash, "The lad deserves her!" he cried; "the girl shall be his!"

The value of a genius for personation is vividly displayed in this story by Annie Thomas, republished from *Temple Bar*. Such brilliant talents are more dangerous than edged tools when coupled with an irresponsible moral sense. But the traveller whose adventures are here described managed, first and last, to get a good deal of enjoyment out of the scoundrel who so persistently dogged his footsteps.

IN A DIM LIGHT.

"RIDE up straight away till you come up under Heltor Down—the round pine-tree wood a' top o' the hill to your left is Heltor Down, master—and then bear away to your right till you come to a house standing, lonely like, in a garden with high pales all round 'un, and then if you sees any one, and likes to do it, there's no harm in your making inquiry again."

"And after I've inquired my way, and passed the house, what then, my man? The light is getting dim already——"

"Ay, so! Fog's thickening up," he interrupted complacently.

"Exactly! and I don't want to be befogged on Dartmoor. Tell me the shortest cut I can take to the nearest village inn?"

"Where do 'ee want to be gwain?" the excellent fellow asked, with the slow, stolid curiosity of his class.

"I *did* want to push on to Princes Town——"

"Gently does it, master," he said, leaning on his pickaxe and surveying me with lethargic derision. "I've told 'ee where to go, and how to go there——"

"You've only told me the road for a short way. Where does it lead to?"

"I'll tell 'ee again," he spoke, with maddening moderation. "I'll tell 'ee again. *I* don't groodge a fellow-creature all the good a few words from me may do him. You ride away till you come up under Heltor Down—the round pine-tree wood a' top o' the hill is

Heltor Down, master—and then bear away to your right till you come to a house standing, lonely like, in a garden with high pales all round 'un, and then if you sees any one, and likes to do it, there's no harm in your making inquiry again."

"Can they direct me to Princes Town?"

"Ay! sure! if they know the way themselves."

It was the close of a midsummer day, and all nature was dripping, as it is the wont of nature to do at midsummer, as well as the other seasons in Devonshire. Breathing a fervent prayer of thanksgiving for being only a wayfarer through this damp and depressing western land, I set myself to the serious consideration of what it would be best for me to do if the information I received at the lonely house under Heltor Down annihilated my hopes of gaining the shelter of an inn, before black, impenetrable darkness made the wild, pathless moors dangerous travelling ground.

The necessity for riding slowly gave me plenty of time for reflection before I reached the lonely house, and I found my mind dwelling curiously on an episode that had occurred the previous evening at Plymouth.

I had gone to a livery stable to which I had been recommended as a likely place at which to find a stout cob for sale at a reasonable price. My intention had been to buy a horse, to ride it over Dartmoor, and such portions of the country as were not readily accessible by train, and then sell it at some market-town when the days of my holiday were ended.

In pursuance of this intention I had been standing in the livery-stable yard, looking over a likely cob with the owner, when a gentlemanly-looking man in a loose dust overcoat had come up to me, and with a polite apology for having inadvertently listened to our conversation, had offered to show me a horse of his own which he said "would suit my purpose exactly." I remembered now as I rode along in the growing gloom how curiously unlike the horse I had described as being what I wanted was to the animal he introduced to my notice.

But though the horse he offered had not attracted my attention for more than a minute, its owner had done so. He had struck me, during the course of a walk we took together from the livery stable to the Hoe, as being rather a well-informed and versatile individual, for he had poured forth an easy and rapid stream of critical remarks upon the prevailing pictures, books, policy and philosophy of the day. His tone, too, was the tone of a gentleman and man of the world; but I remembered now that, though he had led me on to tell him who and what I was, the route I had sketched out for my riding tour, and my intention of taking all my travelling gear with me on horseback, in a light valise strapped on my back, he had maintained a perfect reticence about himself. At the time this had seemed natural, for my position and needs as a traveller had been on the surface, while he (doubtless a resident in the neighborhood) had merely obeyed an instinct of kindness in offering to serve those needs! So I had half unconsciously reasoned at the time. But now in solitude and darkness on Dartmoor, I wished I had found out more about him, or let him find out less about me.

It was a trifle, but it came back to me now vividly. On parting he had laughingly cautioned me against wearing a valuable diamond ring which he just happened to observe on my left hand, during my lonely ride. "Not that you run any risk of being robbed by any of those who are indigenous to the moor soil," he said, "but some of the high roads about here are a good deal infested by the genus tramp, fellows who have limped down from London rookeries, and who burgle and rob so cleverly that they contrive to throw the odium on local rascality, which I believe really to be innocent of all offence in that line."

These words of his recurred to me now, and I lost a few minutes in wrenching my ring off my soddened finger, and putting it away securely in one of the pockets of my little valise. Then I rode on in the dreary darkness, trying to persuade myself that I enjoyed the

uncertainty and romantic discomfort of being alone on an unknown part of Dartmoor on a black night in the dripping rain.

On lifting up my head and gathering up the reins, I pushed on with renewed vigor, for there just before me was a light in a window at last. It burned with such bright encouragement that I gave a shout in response to its mute welcome, and a minute or two afterward another light appeared at an open door, and my horse coming to an abrupt pause, I found that I was close upon the high pales, of which my friend the road-mender had made mention.

By the light held at arm's-length above her head, I saw a woman standing in the doorway; a tall, stout, commonplace woman whose appearance dispelled all the romance of the situation at a glance. She came slowly down the path and opened the wicket gate without a word, but I obeyed her silent motion for me to enter, for I was hungry and wet through, and ready to welcome the roughest shelter and coarsest food.

"Can I stable my horse here, and may I sit by your kitchen fire till daylight?" I asked, as courteously as I could.

"How came you here?" she asked; and I told her.

She gave vent to an ungracious sound between a sigh and a grunt, and looked at me steadily, till I grew impatient and said: "Tell me at once if you mean to let me in, or to turn me from your door in this weather?"

"The weather isn't the worst thing about here. If I was you I'd push on, and not mind a drop o' rain. You're a gentleman, and our ways are not the ways of gentlefolks in this house. Our ways are rough, master —if I was you I'd push on."

As she spoke I heard a dog bark, and a door opened and shut in haste at the back of the house, and a voice that I thought joyfully for a moment I knew, called out, "Polly, where are you?"

"It's my master back from market," the woman explained hurriedly; "he'll be wroth at seeing a stranger. Go into that shed, sir, with your horse till I've got my

master up to bed, then I'll give you a seat by the fire, and such supper as I have."

She caught me by the arm, and half dragged me toward a big wood-shed, where I stood shivering, together with my shivering horse, for the next twenty minutes. At the end of that time she came back, and imposing silence on me by a motion of her hand to her lips, she whispered, "If you come along quiet now, I'll give you a bit of supper. My master's apt to come home a bit tired and teasy from market, but he's abed and asleep now, and if you're quiet you can bide by the kitchen hearth till the morning."

She dragged a bundle of hay down from a rack as she spoke, and seeing my horse fall to on this at once, I gladly followed her into the house.

It was a mean house, meanly furnished so far as I could see, but clean. The passage, floored with bright red brick, was barren of everything save a coarse string mat, and the kitchen to which she led me had nothing in it but a big deal table, a settle, a few chairs, and a grandfather's clock.

Some brown bread and Dutch cheese and a jug of scald milk stood ready for my consumption on the table, and I was preparing to partake of these delicacies with a moorland appetite, when a savory odor of roast chicken and daintily made and cooked pastry was wafted in upon me from—somewhere. I sniffed it in as only a hungry man can sniff, remarking at the same time, "You feed some one in this house better than you're going to feed me, my good woman."

She colored up vividly. "How do you know that?" she asked.

"I smell the fact," I rejoined laughingly. "You have a lodger, I suppose?"

She shook her head, and relapsed into stolidity. "No lodger here; what should bring any one here to lodge, master?"

She looked at me so earnestly as she made her disclaimer, that I in return looked at her earnestly for the first time. I have recorded the impression she had

made upon me when first I caught sight of her at the wicket gate in the light that fell from the upraised lamp. Now looking at her with quickened interest, I saw that the head and face surmounting the tall, stout figure, had each a luxuriant beauty of their own, which redeemed their possessor from that limbo of "commonplace" to which I had too hastily consigned her.

The hair was rough and inartistically arranged, but it was curly and wavy, and of a ruddy gold color that on the head of a fashionable woman would have been of inestimable value. Her complexion was clear and good also, though the tint on her cheeks might have been a trifle too pronounced, but her face was redeemed from any trait of vulgarity by the depth and beauty of purple eyes which gleamed out winningly from between long, dark, curled lashes.

"I thought the trout streams would have brought you lodgers if you wanted them," I answered carelessly, and after gazing at me fixedly for a few moments to see if I meant more than I said, she seemed satisfied to let the subject drop. Taking up her little lamp and bending nearer to me, she whispered:

"You're welcome to a night's shelter, master, but if I was you I'd be on my road soon as the stars show forth. You'll find some more milk in that moog, and water in this pitcher, and that's all I can do for you—'cept advise you to be off soon as the stars show forth."

"Polly!" shouted a voice sleepily from the upstairs region, and with a hasty nod to me the woman vanished, closing the kitchen door behind her.

I took out a little warm woollen shawl that had been packed for me for the protection of my throat in cold weather, and wrapping it over my head, I sat in the settle corner nearest to the fire, and resigned myself to thought—not to sleep.

Curiously rough and uncouth these moorland people were, I thought. With savory and appetizing viands ready cooked in their house, they had wilfully given me barely a crust of bread and cheese, and a glass of that scalded milk which would otherwise have been

consigned to the pigs' tub. What could their station be? The woman in dress and manner was not superior to a laborer's wife, yet the house was too large for a laborer's cottage. Probably as she spoke of her "husband having been to market," he was a small farmer. Yet his voice as he had called "Polly" at the back door, curiously resembled another voice that I had heard—somewhere. Just now? or—long ago? Which was it?

I must have fallen asleep while indulging in these speculations, for I woke with a start. What woke me? In a moment I was quite on the alert The lamp had gone out, and the fire was a black hole merely. What woke me?

Was it a footstep, a hand touching my foot as it rested on the settle, or a breath passing over my face? It had been one of these things, I could swear—but which? Involuntarily I sprang to my feet, and beating my arms about me in a vague effort at self-protection, I made for the door as best I could in the darkness.

After revolving round the settle and the table, and violently assaulting the grandfather's clock, I reached the door, and after an ineffectual fumble or two, I laid hold of the handle and tugged vehemently at it. But the door withstood my most strenuous attempts to open it, and abruptly though unwillingly I came to the conclusion that I was locked in.

Thoroughly awakened by this discovery, I groped my way to the window, determining to make my escape through it without waiting to go through the ceremony of saying good-by to my hostess. Just as I succeeded in unbarring and opening the window, I remembered my valise, which I had left on the settle when aroused. By the time I had got possession of this, a faint gray light stole in through the open window, and by its aid I made my way noiselessly to the wood-shed, where I had left my horse. My horse was gone!

There was not another hut or shed within reach where they could have put him, so deeming that he had found the way to open the door, and had escaped on to the moor, I decided that the best course for me to take

was to go in search of him. If I found him, and I should probably soon do so in the fast-growing light, I argued, I could come back and inquire my way on to Princes Town. If I failed to find him, I must come back to seek other means of moving on, for my pedestrian powers were of the weakest. In either case it was clearly needless for me to disturb the slumbering cottagers yet awhile.

I climbed up Heltor's highest point, and got a bird's-eye view of the country round, but I could not see anything of my horse. I called aloud upon him, but as I did not know his name, and he did not know my voice, I was not greatly surprised at his not responding. Finally, after wearying myself in vain for an hour or two, I made my way back to the lonely house inside the high palings.

It was broad, bright daylight now, and the woman was moving briskly about her household duties, singing as she worked. She looked surprised, and I thought vexed, when I walked in, and told me at once that "she'd hoped I was well on to Princes Town by this time." But when I told her of my midnight disturbance and my missing horse, she looked grave and confused.

"My master and me never heard nothing in the night. To be sure, he sleeps heavy after market days, but I'm a light sleeper, and I never heard footfall of man or beast. Mayhap the cheese lay heavy—it do sometimes at night—and you took a nightmare for a noise?"

"Not having digested the cheese may account for the noise, as you say, but how about the horse?" I answered.

"Strayed!" she said concisely; and then I asked her if of her charity she would give me some breakfast, and ask her husband if he would drive me on to Princes Town.

"My husband's gone to his work an hour agone," she said, again favoring me with one of those earnest glances which had commanded my attention on the previous night.

"And what is his work?" I asked frivolously, for in reality I had no keen desire to gain information concerning the vocation of this unknown gentleman.

"It's hard enough," she muttered, turning away to spread the tablecloth.

"Takes him much from home, does it?" I said cheerfully, for I thought that her sullen demeanor denoted wifely discontent at her lord's absence, and this reminded me of how rapturously my own dear little wife at home in Bloomsbury would welcome me back to the safety of my west-central home, after these wild experiences on Dartmoor.

"If you stayed here to see him before he went out you could have asked him that yourself, master," she said curtly but not uncivilly, and I took the speech and manner as indications of her desire to give all her attention to her household labors.

I ate my breakfast—which meal was a duplicate of my supper minus the cheese—in silence, and then rose to go.

"You can't lend me a horse and cart, or drive me on to Princes Town, or any part of the way, I suppose?" I said, as I opened my valise to find a suitable coin to offer her in payment for the shelter and food she had given.

"I can't, master." She spoke impatiently, and was opening the door with the evident intention of speeding the parting guest, when I cried out:

"My purse is gone! I've been robbed of a ring. What's the meaning of this?" I added the last words in undisguised rage and dismay, as I found that not only my purse but my diamond ring was gone.

"Don't ask me the meaning of it," she said, dauntlessly advancing toward me. "How do I know that you had either purse or ring? You came here unasked, and I gave you the best I had, and you stole out of my house like a thief in the night, and now come back with a story about having been robbed of your purse and ring. Take care, master! My husband isn't at home I know as well as you do; but I'm no timid lone woman

to be frightened by your bluster. You clear out of this at once, or I'll help you out."

She need not have assured me that she was "no timid lone woman," for my declaration that I had "been robbed" seemed to have transformed her into a virago of a most aggressive type.

"Nice thanks I should get from my husband if he knew that in return for my giving a stranger, who'd no right to ask it, shelter from the weather for the night, his house got a bad name, and his wife was as good as called a thief," she vociferated; and when I expostulated, and attempted to protest that I really *had* been robbed—though I didn't for an instant suspect her of being guilty of the foul deed—she grew so loud and boisterous that I was glad at last to escape from her house and her tongue, and without a guide or any instruction, to try and make my way to some haunt of men.

After many a weary hour's walking, I knew not whither, I came to Princes Town, and there, to a police official summoned at my request by the landlord of the hotel, I told the story of my last night's lodging and my losses.

"We must be back upon them without any delay with a couple of constables," he said, and presently I found myself in a dog-cart behind a fast horse, in company with three arms of the law, bowling rapidly back on the road I had recently traversed on foot, so far as I could remember it.

"As for Heltor," the constable said, "there's no beacon or hill of that name on Dartmoor, so far as I know. I think the hedger must have been in the swim, sir," but I scoffed at this suggestion, avowing truthfully that it had never been my lot to see a more innocent or stupid yokel.

It was late in the afternoon when I managed to guide them to the lonely house inside the high palings. The same woman opened the door to us as had sped me stormily in the morning. She looked surprised when she saw my companions, but neither alarmed nor an-

noyed, and the tone in which she called back to her husband, "Here, Dick, here's the gentleman I told you on, come back with the bobbies," was distinctly cheerful and amused.

In a moment Dick himself came forward, awkward, but smiling and friendly. He seemed a cross between a farmer and a gamekeeper, I thought, judging from his leggings and brown velveteen coat.

"What can I do for you?" he asked, addressing the constable. "My missus has been telling me that when I went to bed last night, with a glass of hot grog inside me, she was silly enough to let a stranger in. You're he, I s'pose?" he asked, abruptly turning to me.

I confessed myself at once, and he went on sneeringly:

"I've found your horse for you—'twas grazing quiet as a lamb not ten yards from my spinny. You're welcome to search for your watch, or whatever 'tis you've lost."

"I don't for a moment suspect your wife or you——" I stammered, but he broke in upon my apology with a coarse laugh, and bidding the policemen search and be quick about it, he went back to his supper.

They searched the house thoroughly, but though upstairs they found one or two things that seemed unaccountably out of place in that habitation, they did *not*, it is almost needless to say, find either my purse or my diamond ring. I left the house firmly believing that I should never gain any clew to their disappearance, or cast eyes upon the master or the mistress of that lonely house again.

Before I parted with the policemen, and took my solitary way on my regained horse again, I heard one man say to the other, "Chap don't look much fit for such a bedroom as that, does he?"

"No! and he don't look much as if a light overcoat was the thing he'd go to market in. But, lor' bless you! these fellows that go about the country horse-dealing, pick up notions from their betters."

"Is that man a horse-dealer?" I asked, and they told

me "a sort of one." He owned a number of Dartmoor ponies, and made a pretty penny by them at South Brent Fair every year.

"That's where I've seen him, and I've always heard he never came about here till about Brent Fair time," the other man said indifferently. Then they bid me good-day, and we went on our respective ways, for I had decided not to go back to Princes Town, but to make my way to a nearer railway station, at which, by leaving my horse in pawn, I might raise funds to carry me back to town.

As I rode along, "Dick's" resemblance to some one I had seen very lately haunted me, but it was not till I had been some hours in the train that I grasped the fleeting fancy, and held it tightly till my memory verified it.

"Dick" and my stupid informant the "hedger" were either twins—or one!

. . . . . .

Two years passed away, and though I had communicated my suspicions to the local police, nothing had come of their efforts to identify my men or recover my lost property. The lonely house was lonelier than ever, I heard, by reason of being uninhabited, and no trace could be found of the gentleman who had accosted me in the livery-stable yard, of the hedger who had laid down his pickaxe in order to laboriously misdirect me, or of "Dick," the owner of the Dartmoor ponies.

I had almost forgotten my adventure, never giving a thought to it indeed, save on those occasions when my wife sadly bemoaned the loss of that fine diamond ring which she had always declared ought to have adorned her finger.

Ascot was near at hand; and dining one night with the one friend in our circle who drove a drag and had a couple of teams of good horses, the conversation turned on the various ways in which we were going.

"Go with me, Mrs. Elliot," our host said to my wife. "I can't offer you the box seat, for that's promised to Mrs. Frank Willoughby; but if you two will join

us," he went on, looking at her, "we shall be as jolly a party as there will be on the course."

We accepted the invitation, and I idly asked: "And who is the favored Mrs. Frank Willoughby?"

"It's difficult to say, Mr. Elliot," my friend's wife chimed in. "Mrs. Frank Willoughby is the wife of Mr. Frank Willoughby, who is a very charming summer friend of ours—a *this* summer's friend, I would have you understand. He's very amusing, and she's very pretty, and they have a delicious little house in Palace Gardens Terrace, and give dear little dinners, and—that's about all I can tell you about them."

"Willoughby's an awfully clever fellow," our host took up the strain of praise enthusiastically, "a first-rate mimic—would run Corney Grain or George Grossmith hard if he went in for that kind of thing in public."

"I've heard that said of several other fellows," I remarked, "and I've generally found that I should be rather sorry for them if they did go in for that kind of thing in public."

"Oh! but Mr. Willoughby really *is* clever; quite as good as a professional," the lady of the house said eagerly. "You *should* see him flap his arms like wings, and cluck and call like a hen——"

"I think he's better as the obliging man at the picnic, who mixes the salad with champagne, and pours out a brimmer of Lucca oil for the local beauty to drink," some one else chimed in.

"Undoubtedly his best thing is the west-country peasant," our host said decidedly; "but you must meet him at dinner here one night, Mrs. Elliot; he won't have scope enough on the top of the drag."

There was a little more conversation about him, all of which went to prove that Mr. Frank Willoughby was one of those genial geniuses who are pronounced to be "decided acquisitions to every circle," and when we went home that night my wife and I congratulated ourselves and each other on the opportunity so soon to be given us of "knowing the Willoughbys."

. . . . . .

As I mounted the drag on the Ascot day, I saw that the box seat was occupied by a lovely young woman in a dress, the sublime simplicity of which must have cost her husband about as much as I allow my wife to dress on for the whole year. But the wearer of the dress was lovely enough to deserve anything she desired, and when I was introduced to her, and found she was Mrs. Frank Willoughby, I looked round with something like envy in my usually well-regulated married heart, for the happy man who owned her.

As my eyes travelled over three or four unknown faces and forms, they fell upon a white, well-formed strong hand, on the fourth or little finger of which sparkled!—yes, I could swear it!—*my* diamond ring! In another moment I was looking recognizingly into the eyes of the gentleman who had beguiled my spare hour at Plymouth with his graceful and incisive criticisms on the men, pictures, and books of light and leading of the day.

It was all revealed to me now! The accomplished gentleman who could "do" a poultry-yard or Devonshire peasant with equal facility was none other than the "hedger" and "Dick."

The horses proved unruly, and we started before I could make up my mind what to do. He appeared to be quite unconscious and at ease; but I resolved to tax him with the robbery, and give him in charge as soon as I could do so without creating a scene. Meanwhile I kept my eyes on the white hand, whereon flashed the diamond ring, with such persistency that at last he leisurely drew a pair of gloves from his pocket and put them on.

Meanwhile his beautiful wife on the box kept up a lively stream of badinage, and I wondered what had become of the coarse, big, handsome woman who had lived in the lonely house on the moor with her husband "Dick."

I took an opportunity of apprising my friend on whose drag we were of what had happened, and what would presently happen, soon after we reached the

course. He was shocked, of course, and incredulous, but I knew that I was not mistaken; and so, when I saw a detective whom I knew, in plain clothes, at a little distance, I went off to secure his services.

I was not absent five minutes, but when I returned to the drag Mr. and Mrs. Frank Willoughby had left it.

"They'll be back in a minute," my friend explained rather anxiously; "his wife's mother passed on with some friends, and though they tried to attract her attention, she didn't see them, so they've run after her. They'll be back directly; but I say, old fellow, I'm *sure* you're mistaken! Willoughby *can't* be the man you want!"

"We shall see," I said; but, confidently as I spoke, "we have not seen." Whether they are still pursuing his vanishing mother-in-law, or whether they lost their way and missed the drag, or whether, as is more likely, they retired from fashionable life while they could do so with comfort, is not known. But certain it is that from that day to this we have never set eyes on either Mr. or Mrs. Frank Willoughby or my diamond ring!

The abiding influence of a great love, even though it may have been a disappointed one, is the motive of this unpretending story, which was written for *The Strand* by Henry Murray. As much as Romola did for her poor Florentine sister through love for Tito, this humble soldier was willing to do for his successful rival.

AN EPISODE OF '63.

NIGHT had fallen on the banks of the Chippaloga, and the fight was over. It had been hot and fierce while it lasted, and the battered remnant of Southern troops, though at last they had been forced to flight, leaving one-third their force on the field, had thinned the numbers of their conquerors. Though the smallest of the episodes of a war whose issue settled the future of the American continent and affected the history of all mankind, the battle had brought the peace of death to many a valiant heart, its bitterness to many a woman and child, who, yet unaware, were praying, safe in distant cities, for the husbands and fathers whose lips would never more meet theirs. Overhead, the stars sparkled keenly in the frosty sky, but from the horizon a ridge of inky cloud spread upward to the zenith, threatening not only to quench their feeble fire, but to deepen the crisp powdery snow in which the landscape was smothered. The river ran like a long black snake between its whitened banks.

To Roland Pearse, monotonously tramping on sentry duty along the track worn by his own feet in the snow at a tantalizing distance from the nearest of the small watch-fires which gleamed around the central one, where the officers were sunk in sleep, it seemed as if the dawn would never come. A year's hard campaigning had toughened him to all the accidents of war, and the coldest and longest night's watch after the hardest day's fighting or marching came to him, as a rule, naturally enough. But he had been wounded in the fight, though

not seriously, yet painfully, and between the consequent loss of blood and the bitter cold was weary well-nigh to death. In the dead stillness of the night the monotonous chant of the river near at hand combined with weakness and weariness to stupefy his senses, and for minutes together he shuffled along the track he had worn in the snow with a quite unconscious persistence, awakening at the end of his beat with a nerve-shattering start, and falling asleep again ere he had well turned to retrace his steps. At last, a deeper doze was terminated by his falling at full length in the snow. He gathered his stiff, cold limbs together, and limped along shivering, swearing at the snow which had penetrated different loopholes of his ragged uniform, and, slowly melted by contact with his scarce warmer skin, served at last to keep him awake. He drew from his pocket a flask containing a modicum of whiskey. It was little enough—he could gratefully have drunk twice the amount; but, with a self-denial taught by many bitter experiences, he took only a mouthful, and reserved the rest for future needs.

With a vague idea that a new beat would somewhat relieve the monotony of his watch, he struck into another track, and trudged resolutely at right angles with his former course, the two lines of footsteps making a gigantic cross upon the snow. His former lassitude was again beginning to conquer him, when it was suddenly dissipated by a voice, which rang out on the stillness with startling suddenness, instinct with anguish:

"If you have the heart of a man in your breast, for God's sake, help me!"

Twenty feet from where he stood, Roland beheld the figure of a man raised feebly on one elbow above the level of the snow. There was only just light enough to distinguish it. He approached it cautiously, with his rifle advanced, and shooting rapid glances from the prostrate figure to every clump of snow-covered herbage or inequality of ground which might afford shelter for an ambuscade.

"I am alone," the man said.

He spoke each word upon a separate sob of pain and weakness. He wore the Southern uniform, and Roland saw that one arm and one leg dragged from his body, helpless and distorted. An old sabre cut traversed his face from the cheek-bone to the temple. He looked the very genius of defeat.

"I am dying!" he panted at Roland.

The young man pulled his beard as he looked down at him, and shrugged his shoulders with a scarce perceptible gesture.

"I know," said the Southerner; "I don't growl at that. I've let daylight in a few of your fellows in my time, and would again, if I got the chance. Now it's my turn, and I'm going to take it quiet. But I want to say something—to write something to my wife in Charleston. Will you do that for me? It isn't much for a man to ask of another. I don't want to die and rot in this cursed wilderness without saying good-by to her."

"You must look sharp, then," said Roland, kneeling beside him, "for I shall be called into camp in a few minutes."

He took an old letter from his pocket, and with numbed fingers began to write, at the wounded man's dictation, on its blank side.

"My darling Rose," he began.

Roland started as if stung by a snake, and bent a sudden look of questioning anger on his companion's face. The Southerner looked back at him for a moment with a look of surprise. Then his face changed.

"Jim Vickers!" said Roland.

"Roland Pearse!" cried the other; and for a moment there was silence between them.

"Last time your name passed my lips," said Roland, slowly, "I swore to put a bullet into you on sight."

"I guess you needn't," said Vickers; "I've got two already. Not that I'm particular to a bullet or so, only you might finish the letter first, anyhow. For God's sake, Pearse," he continued, sudden emotion conquer-

ing his dare-devil cynicism, "write the letter! It's for Rose. She won't have a cent in the world if I can't send her the news I want you to write, and she and the child will starve. I got her by a trick, I know, and a nasty trick, too; but I'd have done murder to get her. She was the one woman I ever cared a straw for, really. And she loves me, too. Shoot me, if you like; but, for God's sake, write the letter."

Roland bent his head over the scrap of paper again.

"Go on," he said, hoarsely, and Vickers went on, panting out the words with an eagerness which proved the sincerity of his affection. The letter had regard to the disposition of certain sums of money for which the voucher had been destroyed by fire during the siege of Philipville two days previously. It was scarcely ended when a bugle sounded from the camp.

"That's the sentinel's recall," said Roland. "I must get in. I'll forward the letter the first chance I get."

He rose; Vickers, with a dumb agony of grateful entreaty in his face, feebly held up his left hand—the right arm was shattered. After a moment's hesitation Roland bent and took it.

"Here," he said, "take this."

He dropped his flask beside him. "Keep your heart up; perhaps you ain't as bad as you think. I'll see if I can get help for you."

Tears started to the wounded wretch's eyes.

"Rose had better have taken you, I guess," he said. Roland turned sharply away.

"I'll be back as quickly as I can," he said, and ploughed his way back into camp without a single backward glance. Coming to a large tent, the only one in the camp, roughly run up as a temporary hospital, he passed between two rows of prostrate figures, sunk in the sleep of exhaustion or tossing in agony, to where a man in the uniform of an army surgeon was bending, pipe in mouth, over the body of a patient. "I want to speak to you when you've finished, Ned."

The surgeon nodded without raising his eyes, completed his task, ran his blood-stained fingers wearily

through his hair, and turned to Roland with a yawn and a shiver.

"That's the last of 'em," he said; "I've been at it since nightfall, and I'm dead beat. Cut it short, old man; we start in an hour, and I meant to get a wink of sleep."

"I'm afraid you'll have to do without it," said Roland. "Do you remember Jim Vickers?"

"Jim Vickers?" repeated the surgeon. "Oh, yes! The man who married Rose Bishop."

Roland winced and nodded.

"He's out there, shot in the arm and leg. Says he's dying. He didn't know me, and asked me to write a word for him to Rose—to his wife. I want you to come and have a look at him."

The surgeon shrugged, with a half yawn.

"He's a reb, I s'pose? Haven't seen him in our crowd."

"Yes," said Roland, "but one man is pretty much the same to you as another, I reckon, and—you know Rose. You might save him."

Ned shrugged again, tossed some lint and other necessaries into a bag on the table, and they set out together. They found Vickers asleep, with the empty whiskey flask lying on the snow beside him.

There was a ruined shed at a hundred yards' distance, to which they carried the wounded man, who woke and groaned as he was raised. Arrived under shelter, Ned silently betook himself to examining Vickers' wounds. Arm and leg were both shattered, and three of his ribs were broken by a horse's hoof. Roland watched his friend's face, but it wore the aspect of even gravity common to the faces of men of his profession engaged at their work, and nothing was to be learned from it. His task finished, he patted his patient's shoulder, collected his tools, and left the shed. Roland followed him to the door.

"What do you think? Can he pull through?"

"He would with proper nursing and good food, not without."

"Can we take him with us?"

"No, the colonel wouldn't hear of it. We have to join Meade at Petersburg in two days, and we can't afford to be bothered with lame prisoners. Leave him some biscuit and a bottle of whiskey, and let him take his chance. We've done all we could."

"I *can't* leave him," said Roland.

"You've got mighty fond of him all of a sudden," said Ned, with something of a sneer.

"I'm as fond of him as I always was," answered Roland. "It's Rose."

"Well," said the other, after a moment's silence, and with the air he might have worn had he found himself forced to apply the knife to the flesh of his own child, "if you want my opinion, you shall have it. You'll do a long sight better business for Rose if you let the fellow die. And, besides, you *can't* save him. He'd take months to heal up in hospital, with every care and attention."

"Somebody might come along and give me a hand to get him to the nearest town," said Roland vaguely, but tenaciously.

"The nearest town is thirty miles away. How would you get him there? It's impossible. Besides, look at this." He pointed to the sky, an even blank of thick gray cloud. "That'll be falling in another hour. You'd be snowed up. And then—hang it all, man, I must be as mad as you are to discuss the thing at all. You don't suppose you're going to get leave of absence to nurse a Johnny Reb?"

"I might take it," said Roland.

"And be shot for desertion?"

"That's as may be. The chances are I shouldn't be missed till you were too far away to send back for me. I must go and answer to my name, and then see if I can't drop behind."

Ned held his head in his hands as if it would else burst with the folly of his friend's idea.

"I can't stay here all day talking d——d nonsense," he said angrily. "I'm off into camp."

He strode away, and Roland kept pace with him. He did not need his friend's assurance of the folly of the act he meditated. He quite recognized that, but it was only in the background of his thoughts, which were filled with the memory of a woman's face. How could he leave the man Rose loved to die, while any possible effort of his might suffice to save him?

The first flakes of the coming snowstorm fell as the detachment started. It marched in very loose order, for the road was rough, the snow deep, most of the men more or less broken with wounds and fatigue, and it was known that no enemy was within sixty miles. Roland fell, little by little, to the rear, where the clumsy country wagons lumbered along full of the wounded under Ned's charge.

"You'll take care of the letter," he whispered, and thrust it into his friend's hand. "Good-by. I shall fall in with the next detachment if I pull through long enough. If not——"

He nodded, and at a sudden turn of the road, here thickly surrounded by maple and hemlock, darted among the trees, and listened, with his heart in his ears, to the jingle and clatter of arms as his comrades marched on. It died away upon the snow-laden air, and he retraced his steps to the shed with an armful of dry leaves and twigs, with which, by the sacrifice of one of his few remaining cartridges, he speedily made a blazing fire. Vickers lay quiet, watching him through half-shut lids.

"Say, Roland," he said, presently, "what sort of game is this?"

"I'm going to see if I can pull you through," said Roland, with an affectation of cheerfulness.

"You can't," said Vickers; "I heard what Ned said just now. I'm booked for the journey through, I know it. Don't you be a fool. Follow the boys, and leave me here. I'm beyond any man's help. You won't? Well, you always were a nutmeg-headed sort of creature. I never knew you have more than one idea at a time, and that one wasn't worth much, as a general

thing. But this is madness, sheer, stark madness! Look at the snow! Another hour or two, and we shall be snowed up. It's just chucking a good life after a bad one. I know you ain't doing it for me. It's for Rose. Well, if it was any use, I wouldn't say no. But it isn't. I shall be a dead man in twenty-four hours at most. Nothing can save me."

"I'm just going to the wood," said Roland, taking up his gun, and speaking in a quite casual tone. "If there's any game about, this weather will drive it under cover. I'll be back presently, anyhow."

He flung some of the broken timber of the shed upon the fire, and went out.

He had not taken six paces through the blinding flakes when Vickers' voice rang out with startling loudness and suddenness, "Good-by, Roland!" and a loud report seemed to shake the crazy old hut to its foundation.

Roland ran back. Vickers was lying dead, with fire-light playing brightly on the barrel of a revolver clinched in his left hand.

Ten minutes later he was lying in a deep snow-drift, and Roland was tramping through the snow on the track of his detachment.

The part that photography plays in affairs of the heart is known to be important, but rarely is it illustrated as piquantly as in this story, which was written by E. Moberly and is republished from *Belgravia*.

"PIKEY."

I HAD the story from Moroni himself—Cesario Bartolommeo dei Moroni, as he writes himself now and then—the "Moroni" of London, Paris, and New York.

He is a great man now. Kings, princes, and potentates, celebrities, native and foreign, actors, cabinet ministers, and pretty women are getting themselves photographed in his smart studios every day of the week; but when I first knew him he was but a journeyman at an Islington artist's, and spelt his name with a "y," as did the Irish kings, his forefathers, before him.

We met at Daisycliffe, where we had the hotel to ourselves. It was long past the end of the season. We drifted into companionship, dined together in the coffee-room each evening, and smoked our morning pipes pacing the spray-swept, shingle-strewn Parade in dual solitude.

"I like the place," Moroni said. "I've reason to. My first professional success was achieved here, in that very spot," and he stopped to contemplate a piece of waste ground which a board indicated as the site of "Daisycliffe Mansions West."

"There was a row of fishermen's huts hereabout," he went on. "The hotel was built, but shut up, bankrupt. Five shops in the High Street. Two trains to London a day—fare one pound nineteen, third class."

"But what ever brought you here?" I interrupted.

"Vanity, sir; vanity, and impatience of servitude, and a desire to be my own master. I had a good situation in London, but I did not pull well with the principal and wanted to start for myself. Also, I was abom-

inably taken in by my wife's brother—a plausible, lovable, mendacious young scamp. He had a business down here, however he came by it, and he actually persuaded me to take it off his hands in lieu of some money which should have come to Teresita on her father's death. It was too far for previous inquiries. He showed us his accounts—pure works of fiction every line of them—and photographs of the place, almost as delusive—one of the Parade crowded with well-dressed promenaders—that was taken on a Sunday—the whole population come home from church this way; one of the big hotel—carriages standing outside, waiters on the steps, company at the windows—*that* was done the day the directors held their winding-up meeting there—the only visitors it had seen for six months; views of Belminster, the cathedral town, with its great Northern race-meetings—only distant half an hour by train, which never stopped at Daisycliffe in those days—Cliffe Castle, the seat of Lord Sandbar, adjoining the town. Well, you shall hear what *that* came to presently. We looked at the pictures, believed in his descriptions, closed the bargain, and walked into Daisycliffe one lovely evening in early autumn, Teresita carrying the bambino, and I wheeling all our worldly goods on a truck from the station.

"The studio looked promising. It was a cottage enlarged, with plenty of plate-glass and black-and-gold decoration about it. It looked on the Parade, and the Parade looked—much as it does now. I went up and down prospecting. A knot of fishermen lounging round a capstan at one end; at the other a young lady immersed in study. The hotel was shuttered up. All the weedy little row of lodging-houses had blinds down and dingy bills stuck in every window. I went up to the town. A few out-at-elbows-looking tradesfolk lounging idly at their doors eyed me as I passed with unfriendly curiosity—all except the landlord of the 'Blue Lion' public, who was friendly and invited me to come up that evening to a social gathering in the tap-room. I pocketed my pride and a dozen ele-

gant gold-lettered cards of terms for distribution and went.

"Such a low-spirited, hopeless lot I met there!

"All the talk was of bad debts, long credit, shortness and poorness of the season's business, and the iniquities of the railway company, which seemed to have laid itself out to ruin the unlucky little town.

"I mentioned Castle Cliffe by way of turning the conversation, and asked if Lord Sandbar did nothing for the place. 'Sandbar? Oh, Lord! Do anything for the place? *Sandbar?* You may well say Sandbar. Ah, just so, *Sandbar*—Sandbar!'

"Not very full or explanatory, but as pregnant with dark meaning as if it had been a chorus of virtuous villagers in an opera expounding the iniquities of the wicked baron. Not that Lord Sandbar was wicked. On the contrary. He was the result of careful bringing-up by his mother and his step-father—a popular preacher. His sins, if any, were purely of omission. *He* keep house like a nobleman and make the castle custom worth having? Not he! Visitors from London and shooting parties? Sunday-school teachers and missionaries out for a holiday—that was about his sort. Does he hunt? No. Yacht? No. Entertain or do anything like a gentleman? Not a bit of it. What does he do for Daisycliffe? Can't say, unless it's to shut up all the footpaths round the castle and stop the Foresters' Fête being held in the park. Is he married? No, nor likely. Won't let a woman come near him, married or single. It's as much as the housekeeper's place is worth to let one set foot in the castle. They do say as he goes about with a loaded pistol in his pocket, and would let fly as soon as look at her if he caught one crossing the park—and so on for half an hour. That was my first experience of Daisycliffe."

"I don't seem to see where the professional success comes in," I said.

"I didn't, I can tell you. I took five shillings in the first week, one and sixpence in the second. The third we were left to ourselves. The fishermen at last gave

up the joke of hustling one another in with the request to me to 'take him handsome for his young woman.' Even the small-boy population got tired of us and left our window unsmeared by inquisitive noses. Then I tramped over to Belminster to see if I could raise enough on some of our possessions to take us back to die—if starve we must—in London.

"I found Belminster a-ferment with the stir and excitement of the race week. No murmur of it had drifted over to us. The flag waved over Cliffe Castle, showing that some of the family were there; also the short cut across the park was boarded up, and I had an extra mile and a half of road to tramp. That was all the earl's coming had done for Daisycliffe.

"I reached home dog-tired, and utterly cast down. Teresita met me with a smile and a good dinner. She was never disheartened in the worst of times. She could make merry over a crust, sing and cuddle the baby, and invent excuses for the young swindler Tonino just as if we hadn't changed our last gold coin. I listened gloomily to her, and answered sharply, till a sudden unfamiliar sound silenced us both. The studio bell!

"We were in the little outer office in a minute. A figure stood there with its back to us contemplating the photographs in a case on the wall—a small figure, a dingy figure, a figure in a bell-crowned felt hat perched on a shock head of hair surmounting a suit of ragged velveteen terminating in a lace-up man's boot and a trodden out highlow—a boy, and a boy with 'tramp' and 'gypsy' written on every inch of him.

"I strode in upon him wrathfully. 'What are you doing here?' I demanded.

"Nowise abashed, he turned and faced me. 'Did you make all these?' he asked. 'Will you please make a picture of me?'

"I stood fairly transfixed at the audacity of the imp. He was a slight slip of a lad—perhaps twelve or thirteen years old, with a small childish face as brown as a nut. He had clawed his hat off as he spoke, and his

hair fell over his eyes in elf-locks black as a coal. A red handkerchief was twisted round his slender brown throat, and he had stuck a sprig of honeysuckle in his button-hole. He carried a blackthorn stick, and I noticed he leaned upon it and walked with a limp. I took all this in—instinctively, I suppose, for of my first look at him I remember nothing but his eyes.

"They were cast down when he first addressed me, but as he spoke, up swept the heavy black lashes and out flashed from under the shadow of his elf-locks two great dazzling gray stars. A positive shock seemed to pass through me in that second—an odd unaccountable thrill such as no boy's eyes ever caused in this world before. Perhaps it was only the startling incongruity of those clear, light-glancing irises with the coal-black brows and swarthy skin. I couldn't resist provoking another look.

"'Come, get out of this. What made you think of coming here?' The long lashes quivered, but never lifted. He stood fumbling in the bosom of his dingy waistcoat and dragged out a crumpled piece of paper folded and refolded into a wad. Then came the look I had been waiting for—the sudden flash of gray lightning from under the cloudy brows.

"'A begging letter, eh?' but I took it and unfolded it very slowly, watching the boy's face as I did so. It was a clever face, square-chinned with a resolute delicate mouth and impudent upturned nose. When he saw that I meant to read the letter a grin of delight showed all his gleaming teeth, and he nodded to himself as if he considered his business settled. Here's the letter. You can see for yourself."

Moroni searched in his pocket-book and found it.

"My dear Jake: Although no friend, as you are awear, to tramps and pikeys such as yourself, yet I must say I always found you steady and well-meaning, Jake, and certainly of use in the matter of Mr. Blissett's sick cow, which is why as a friend I would not wish you to hear unprepared that your poor mother, coming home from hopping, was knocked down by a farm cart, Jim Davis

driving, and not as sober as he might have been, and was taken for dead to the County Hospital, where she now lies, as I saw with my own eyes last visitors' day, kept as comfortable as if she were a lady, but almost out of her mind with fretting after you, which is naturally very trying to all about her. 'I want Jake, just a sight of Jake,' she goes on continual, and keeps your old red handkercher under her pillow and talks to it like a Christian. Now, Jake, I always liked you, and would never hear but that there are two sides to a story, even when it is one's own fat Michaelmas goose. There were others pikeys about besides yourself, Jake, and I don't think you would go to harm your friends, so do, like a good boy, come back at once, and give the poor soul some comfort if you was but to hear her.

"Your friend as you behave,

"LOUISA BLISSET."

"I read this aloud to Teresita, who came in with our boy in her arms.

"'Why don't you go? At once!' she cried.

"The boy hung his head and faltered out a long explanation. Michael had brought him there—to Belminster. Michael was one of their tribe. They had a horse to sell, and nobody but he, Jake, could manage it. It was a point of honor to stay.

"'But they told me—that you could do my picture—as like as life—and I could send it by one of our people.'

"'How do you mean to pay for it?'

"'When the horse is sold——' he began eagerly.

"'Thank you, my good boy, but I don't work on credit.'

"'Ah, the poor child!' Teresita broke in. 'Think, Cesarino mio, it is for his mother. We are poor, dreadfully poor, but we can help him, and the Holy Mother above will not let us be the poorer.'

"If Teresita had set her heart upon it, that was quite sufficient without the interposition of the saints. 'Come this way,' I said, not too cordially. But the lad stood staring stupidly and shamefacedly. 'Don't you want it after all?'

"Then he made a sudden dash at Teresita and kissed

her hand. 'You are a good, good woman!' he cried with a choked voice, 'and shall not be robbed by me. I will pay you. I swear by Heaven—*prémy mullos dádas!*' Then he followed me.

"There were the usual stock properties about; among others a low rustic paling. I was studying how to pose him, when he spied this, dragged it forward, and had kicked off his two unmatched mud-weighted boots and had sprung astride of the top rail in an instant, his slender brown feet lightly twisted together, his old cap full of hazel twigs and nuts between his knees—as perfect a picture as I could have wished to make. His spirits went up and his eyes danced; he began to whistle and sing snatches of songs and make grimaces at the baby, who gaped at him open-mouthed over Teresita's shoulder. Yet he could be still. It was a marvel to me how, but there I had the quaint roguish smile and flashing upward glance crystallized under my fingers at will. I became fascinated with my work and took negative after negative. The light was strong and clear, and I promised to print him a proof before he left. He would not trust to my sending it—wouldn't tell me where to find him in Belminster, or the name of the hospital where his mother was. Then while I was preparing a plate he began to sing. I couldn't understand a word of the song, but it made me feel like crying, till he gave a whistle and stamp, and, snapping his fingers, started off into a dance with a chorus that set Teresita clapping her hands and capering, and the baby jumping and crowing with ecstasy. Before he left he had confided to us the whole story of the missing Michaelmas goose with such wonderful mimicry of speech and action that even now I can imagine I saw the whole proceeding. The pert gypsy wench, with a bundle of grass and leaves under her cloak instead of a baby, hovering round the blacksmith's goose-pen, with a basket of small wares; the blacksmith's facetiousness over the choice of a neckerchief and breastpin, and clumsy attempts at gallantry; the excitement of the instant when his back was turned and

with one artful grasp and twirl the fattest of the flock was seized, and gasped his last, done up in the baby's red shawl. He acted it all—the muzzy, beery, amorous smith; the coquettish, wicked-eyed young gypsy; and the dying flap and flutter of the victim. How we laughed! while I secretly determined to make sure that the watch was safe in my pocket and the drops in Teresita's ears before I showed our fascinating young friend off the premises.

"It was dusk when he bade us good-by and departed, the photograph tenderly wrapped in the red rag from his neck.

"'I will come again in *dui—trin—shtār divvus*—in four days more, at this hour, and I will pay you.'

"'If he does not the Holy Mother will,' said Teresita, with conviction.

"I am afraid I had not Teresita's faith in either one or the other, miserable sinner that I was. We closed for the night, and I was moodily clearing the studio of the litter of cracked nuts, muddy footmarks, and a stray brass button, when a knock at the door shook our house to its foundations.

"A man in the Sandbar livery was unsteadily holding on to the door handle. He brought a note which ought to have reached me an hour before. Lord Sandbar would be happy to see me at the castle to-morrow. He wished for some instruction and assistance in photography, and also desired to have some views of Cliffe and the castle ruins. The terms offered were princely. How Teresita exulted!

"I was at the castle early next day. It is a splendid ivy-grown old pile, half in crumbling ruins, the other half dark and scowling with fortifications, turret and battlement, drawbridge and portcullis—the very home for the grim-visaged man-hating recluse that I, somehow, expected to find; or if not, then a Byronic youth with a haughty mien, and a Woe stamped on his passion-furrowed brow. Lord Sandbar was neither. Only a great solemn awkward lout, with broad shoulders, and a ruddy countenance composed into a priggish sobriety.

He was evidently 'serious,' and began to exhort me affectionately like a little tract before I had finished unpacking my traps. I didn't mind. It was all in the day's work, but it looked as if it hadn't agreed with the other visitor at the castle—a stout, jovial little gentleman with a merry eye and a weather-beaten countenance, whom Lord Sandbar called Major Carberry. I found that he was an old friend of Lord Sandbar's father, and had asked for a few days' shooting at Cliffe, and Lord Sandbar, who had come down on business, had stayed to entertain him.

"I think they must have had a bad time together. The earl looked askance at the major as a little dog does at a big one who may take him up and shake him any day; the major eyed the earl with curiosity not unmixed with disgust. 'Good Lord! that *that* should be poor Ralph's son!' I heard him growl in a consternated aside once. Both received me and my camera cordially as a sort of safe neutral subject. The major was, as I knew by report, a distinguished amateur artist, and one whom it was worth my while to cultivate. The earl was anxious to learn. 'Going to make magic-lantern slides for his Sunday-school tea-parties,' the major explained.

"We worked very harmoniously all day, and I began to get considerably interested in my employer. He was so big, so strong, so full of life and vigor, so incredibly sedate and goody. 'I'm sure the countess would say'—'Mr. Oliphant, my step-father, would not allow'—were phrases continually on his lips, and all his talk was of the doings of his own special little *coterie*, outside of which was no salvation. He had a great deal to tell about his 'work' in the slums, and the ragamuffin class generally; but it seemed to me to consist chiefly in preventing its objects being got at by other folks' 'missions' which didn't happen to match its shade of opinion.

"However, by degrees he gave up preaching when he found it was not expected from him. The major relieved his mind by shooting all the mornings and

working with us in the afternoon, and we got along very harmoniously. Lord Sandbar used to listen with zest to some of the major's marvellous sporting anecdotes. Field sports might have been a passion with him if he had ever been allowed to indulge it. When Major Carberry's reminiscences took a social turn, it was amusing to watch the good young nobleman's face, pink with apprehension of hearing something naughty, his efforts to suppress a shamefaced guffaw, and the extra primness of his demeanor for the next few minutes.

"'He's been bottled and corked up too long, that young man,' the major confided to me. 'His ideas are fermenting in his head. There'll be an explosion some of these days,' and he nodded ominously, perhaps not ill-content with having expedited the process.

"On the fourth day when I arrived at the castle I saw directly that some disturbance had already taken place, though not of the kind the major anticipated. I found him packing his apparatus in a wrathful bustle, and relieving his mind with some very bad language. A fly from the 'Blue Lion' drove up the avenue after me and waited at the door. 'I'm going to Belminster. Yes, and I mean to stay there. I've told that milk-sop there that if he won't spare a horse and a trap for his father's old friend—that, by Jove, I'll put no further strain on his hospitality. It was a letter from his mamma that did it. I'm bad company for him, forsooth! Well, let my lady look out. He's beginning to find the length of her apron string. He'll cut it some day, and then—mark my words,' and the major's tone rose to the prophetic, 'unless he has the luck to fall into the hands of some woman with brains enough for two, he'll go to the dickens!'

"Lord Sandbar was evidently much flurried and discomposed by his guest's departure. I arrived at the explanation by degrees. It was Cup Day at Belminster, and Lord Sandbar had not only flatly refused to go himself, but had also declined 'on principle' to allow his servants and horses to take the major. He had, no

doubt, gained a moral victory; but it had left him ill-tempered and restless, very bitter against the world and the things of it, and determined to go back to town by the evening train.

"We had a very dull day together. I was treated to one or two sour little sermons that ought by rights to have gone to benefit the major, but he was out of range. When I got tired of that sort of thing, I produced, by way of diversion, all the proofs I had printed of 'Pikey,' and persisted in telling the story. The move was successful. Gypsies and the pikey race generally were a class outside Lord Sandbar's previous experience, and he listened greedily. Had I tried in any way to exert an influence for good over this one? I confess that it hadn't occurred to me to do so. Had I not considered it an opening—a manifest opening? The boy had feelings that might have been worked upon. Lord Sandbar evidently regretted not having been there with a tract to try. He seemed curiously attracted by the photographs. He spread them out on the table before him, and sat studying them in silence for a long time. I wondered if the spell of those gray eyes was on him too.

"'Would you like to see him? He promised to come to-night.' Lord Sandbar jumped at the notion. He would come home with me on his way to the Daisycliffe Station, and he went off to get his portmanteau packed.

"Teresita was at the door waving to me excitedly as we drove up. She hardly noticed my companion. 'He has come! Come in. See for yourself! Eccolo!'

"Sure enough, there were his boots on the mat, and there he was several degrees raggeder than before, but with a new bright orange scarf knotted round his neck dancing a fandango with the baby.

"'Sarishan to your kokero!' he cried as we entered, with a grand flourish of the battered old hat into which he had stuck a fine bunch of red berries. 'We've bikened the gry—sold the horse, and Michael has given me my share! Here it is—half for you.' He restored the bambino to Teresita, and with his little white teeth

undid a knot in the corner of his necktie and shook out a little pile of sovereigns and silver into my hand. 'Is that enough?'

"Then he put his arms akimbo, tossed back the elf-locks from his eyes, and stood looking at Lord Sandbar with the full, innocent gaze of a young kitten on its good behavior.

"'I don't want anything like this!' I exclaimed. 'Here, take it back. Keep it for your mother.'

"'I've enough—plenty. And I am going to her this very night. Prastee! Good-night!' He made for the door, but Lord Sandbar's great figure barred it.

"'How are you going, my boy? Shall I drive you back to Belminster?'

"'I don't want to go back to Belminster,' Pikey answered pettishly. 'I can start from here just as well.'

"'But where are you going?'

"No answer.

"'You will be days on the road. Now, listen to me, like a good boy.'

"Sandbar put his hand on the lad's shoulder. It was twisted away impatiently.

"'What business is it of yours?' Pikey demanded with a vicious little snap, like a squirrel at bay. He looked wonderfully handsome, to be sure. His great eyes shone half fierce, half frightened; his cheeks glowed through their tan; and all his small white teeth gleamed wickedly, ready to bite.

"'This is Lord Sandbar,' I interposed; 'a good friend to all poor boys like yourself. He wants to be kind to you if you will let him.'

"'Oh, he does, does he?' said Pikey. The queerest look passed over his face. 'Lord Sandbar!' he murmured thoughtfully. He had got clear of the restraining hand, and walked away from us all to the window, where he stood in silence.

"'Can he have heard of me?' asked the earl, with demure complacency. 'It would be deeply, deeply gratifying——'

"Pikey's shoulders were shaking as if with some suppressed emotion. Teresita stole up to him and laid her arm across them sympathizingly. He looked up, and if the young villain wasn't exploding with laughter over some private joke; but Sandbar noticed nothing. 'Let *me* talk to him,' he said, and I called Teresita away and left them together.

"When we returned in a few minutes the earl was holding the boy's arm with an air of possession.

"'I am going to take Jake to his mother,' he announced. 'He will travel with me to London to-night.'

"'But you are a *boro Gorgio*, and I am only a poor *Romani chal*——' Pikey began to protest; but Sandbar silenced him and bade him say good-by to us all.

"Some unaccountable curiosity made me take the short cut to the station to see them off.

"They had established themselves in a first-class carriage. Pikey, his rags concealed under a sealskin-trimmed coat which I recognized, was nestling down under the great bearskin travelling-rug, his eyes alight and his cheeks poppy-red with excitement. Lord Sandbar sat opposite gazing—not to say gaping—down on his *protégé*. He looked bewildered, strangely stirred by some novel emotion, absorbing, delicious, incomprehensible. He could spare neither word nor look for me.

"'*Kushto Bak!*' cried Pikey, waving his pretty brown hand.

"'The imp's been putting the comether over him too,' I said to myself, and then the train moved off, and I lost sight of my Pikey forever."

Moroni came to a full stop.

"Go on," I said impatiently.

"Which do you want to hear? How I went on and made my fortune, or the end of Lord Sandbar's adventure?"

"I know the end of your story. I think I'd rather go on with Lord Sandbar's. Did he go to the dickens?"

"That is a matter of opinion. I never heard more

of him till the following spring. I was trying to find my way from one out-of-the-way suburb to another beyond the range of trams and omnibuses, when I came upon a dismal forgotten region of old houses, condemned to demolition, surrounded by boardings. Turning the corner, face to face I met 'my Pikey.'

"Not in the flesh, but full length on a poster—the very imp, just as I had taken him astride of the fence in my Daisycliffe studio. There was no mistake. The poster was tinted to represent a monster photograph, and was a copy, I could swear, of my own. At the top, to dispel all doubt, was the name in huge capitals, 'Pikey,' and below the name of a theatre, 'The Diversity,' and a date half-peeled off, but evidently that of the past year.

"I was so utterly perplexed that I left my errand unfulfilled and, returning to town, made at once for 'The Diversity,' or would have done so if I had not been informed that it had ceased to exist. However, on inquiry I found that it had revived under new management as 'The Battenberg,' so, without knowing precisely what I meant to do, I made my way forthwith to the box-office.

"A very civil young gentleman listened to my inquiries with interest, but could afford me no assistance.

"'Pikey? I seem to remember something about that too. It was before my time, though. Ah, there's a gentleman who might be able to help you. Mr. Mountjoy!'

"'Hullo! Why, it's Moroni!' An old comrade of mine whose name had become known as a writer of successful melodrama came up and greeted me. 'Can I do anything for you?'

"'Want to know about "Pikey," eh? Yes, it's a piece of mine. Why was it never brought out? Well, that's a queer story. That was Nancy Bell's portrait you saw, of course. You might have seen it all over the place last autumn. The little wretch put us all in a hole, but she has apologized very prettily since, and I can't afford to quarrel with a countess.'

"'A countess? Pikey? Nancy Bell? Put it a little plainer, that's a good fellow. That gypsy urchin sat to me at Daisycliffe last autumn—that I'll swear. Now how did he get on that poster? That's all I want to find out.'

"'Daisycliffe! Why, of course that's where it all happened. Nancy sent me the photograph from there—said she'd been taken in character by the local artist. Never guessed it was you, though. She went there to be quiet and work at her part, "Jake." I'd written it expressly for her, you know. Lord Sandbar's place is close to Daisycliffe, I believe. There you have it. On the day of first rehearsal, instead of Miss Nancy Bell came wedding cards from the Earl and Countess of Sandbar.'

"I felt the place go round with me. Mountjoy talked on.

"'His people were furious, of course. They thought they had made him so uncommonly safe. In fact, I had met Sandbar once or twice myself before, and, knowing what I did of him, it's a mystery to me to this day how that audacious little hussy ever got at him.'

"I could have told, but I held my peace."

Stories of the influence acquired by animals over man have a curious fascination. Hypnotism has added dignity to these, and a timely interest. This story was written for ROMANCE by Alice C. Getchell.

HYPNOTIZED BY A SNAKE.

I WAS recently called to Washington by a telegram announcing my brother's sudden death under somewhat suspicious circumstances. Upon my arrival at his boarding-house I learned that he had died from the effects of the bite of a rattlesnake which had been sent to him, at his request, the very day of his death, and it was thought by many persons, who, it is hardly necessary to state, were entirely unacquainted with my brother's habits and eccentricities, that he had obtained it for the deliberate purpose of committing suicide. I, who knew and revered him, cannot accept such an explanation of his sad fate, nor do I believe the general public will so misjudge him after reading the following strange story, the manuscript of which was found among his effects. It was evidently not intended for publication, but I feel that my action in the premises is justified under the circumstances.

My love for reptiles, amounting in later life to almost a passion, began in my early boyhood, when, some one having given me a little green-and-gold lizard, I found it a pet so entirely suited to my quiet, studious temperament that I soon made it my constant companion and the object of my tenderest care; loving it only the more because despised by the rest of the household, though how my brothers and sisters could prefer their noisy, romping, ill-smelling cats and dogs to my quiet, fastidious, cleanly little pet, I could not conceive. In time I became the possessor of another lizard, then of several tortoises, terrapins, toads, and frogs, and finally of a pretty little garden snake, which for several days

I kept carefully concealed in my own chamber for fear of shocking my mother, who had a strange, nervous dread of all creeping things. One day the little creature, finding the door open and prompted by an unfortunate spirit of investigation, crawled out into the hallway beyond, just as my father was passing through. There was a cry of "Help, help; kill that snake!" and I hurried to the spot to see my father—great six feet of humanity—cowering in abject fright before the little, timid, harmless eighteen inches of snake squirming at his feet. I called my pet to me, shut him securely within my room again, and returned to find my father—now surrounded by the entire family—wiping great beads of perspiration from his brow, and vowing by everything sacred that every reptile in my possession should be immediately killed. My mother compromised matters, however, by suggesting that they should all be removed to a small, unused tool-house standing at the foot of the garden, to which he consented on condition that nothing of the kind should ever again be brought into the house, under penalty of death to my entire collection. It is needless to say that I gladly accepted his terms; and from that time on I was allowed to spend all my spare time undisturbed in my "snake-house," in the company of my pets, to which I from time to time added such others as I could obtain with my limited resources, and where was laid the foundation of what has since become my life-work. As I grew older, I studied them and their habits and traits with ever-increasing interest, and acquired so much valuable information in regard to them that by the time I was thirty years of age I was an acknowledged authority on reptiles, and quite capable of filling the position at that time tendered me in the scientific department of the National Museum at Washington, where I have now been engaged for a number of years in classifying American reptiles, and in having prepared under my supervision their skins, shells, skeletons, and such other parts as I deem desirable as exhibits in my department. Rare specimens are sent to me from all

parts of the country, and all interest me, though my favorite now, as always, is the snake. No other animal has for me such an irresistible attraction, and I am sure the liking is mutual, for I can handle the most venomous of them with impunity. Only a day or two ago, I overheard one of my subordinates, in talking about me to a fellow-clerk, say: "He is so fond of snakes, and spends so much time petting and fondling them, that he has actually grown to look like one, and I believe has the disposition of one, with a snake's dislike for mankind; and as for womankind, I will wager the surly old fellow never looked a second time at any woman in the whole course of his life."

By his tone he evidently meant to disparage me; he little knows how he elated me. One could pay me no higher compliment than to liken me to God's noblest creation, the snake. If Satan had not known the serpent to be God's chosen one, the most beautiful and seductive of all living things, would he have chosen that guise in which to tempt our first parents to sin? And if Adam and Eve had not so regarded it, would they so readily have yielded to its blandishments? It was man's vindictive spirit after the fall, and not God's inspiration, which prompted the compiler of the book of Genesis to write the oft-quoted curse of the serpent which is mainly responsible for the repulsion toward snakes felt by mankind in general to this day.

As for women, the man was right. They have no attraction whatever for me. Among my numerous pets I find all the affection, companionship, and beauty of woman, unaccompanied by her follies, hypocrisies, and deceits. See my little chameleon yonder; note her delicate form, her lovely color of tender green as she lies dozing on a geranium leaf in yonder window; ah, she feels my glance, she turns, darts toward me, and, as she rests a moment on the edge of my desk, see her change to a yellowish-brown, in accord with the wood on which lie her dainty toes. Come on, little one; come on! How gracefully she moves! Again her color varies, this time to a steely gray, as she steps

lightly on the sleeve of my tweed coat, and turns her head to look coquettishly up into my face. How lovely she is, from the tip of her little round nose to the end of her elongated tail, tapering to the size of the finest needle-point! Across the room is another lizard, the counterpart of my first pet, handsomer in her gold-and-green adornment, and wearing it with infinitely more grace, than any society belle ever wore gold and emeralds, or even diamonds. On the window-sill "basks an old mother lizard and her little lizards eight," a domestic creature she, clad like all her brood in Quaker gray, dotted with innumerable black spots; a most devoted mother and intelligent companion.

What woman can compare with these my beauties, who know no will but mine, and whose affection so rests and soothes me? Bah! women are noisy, awkward, clumsy creatures!

I have only two snakes of my own at present, one a small garter snake, that reminds me always of a French cocotte, with her close-fitting robe of sombre black and the golden necklace around her slender throat. See the wanton way in which she coils and uncoils, turns and twists, eying me meanwhile with sidelong glances from her restless black eyes, to see if I am admiring her. The other, which, out of regard for my landlady's feelings, I keep in my room at the museum, is a handsome female rattler, gifted with all the fascination of the sorceress of the Nile. I call her Cleopatra, and she is the best beloved of all my little family. All day long, if I am not near, she lies with half-open mouth and partly-closed eyes, drinking in the golden glory of the hot summer sun, utterly indifferent to everything else; but when I approach her, her tawny eyes light up and her whole body writhes and quivers with impatience for my caress; she creeps up close to me, rubs her head against my hand, and is content only when she feels tangible proof of my presence by actual contact with my warm flesh. She is a passionate, jealous lady-love, however, and I feel that if I should slight her or show the least sign of waning affection, she would not

hesitate to stab with her poisonous fangs the hand which fondles her. My more timid fellow-clerks have often urged me to remove her fangs; but I should be unworthy her affection could I be guilty of such an outrage, and she would no longer be my Cleopatra. I wish now that I had long ago given her greater liberty, and tried with her who so loves me the experiment in which I was yesterday so successful with another and perfectly strange snake. If those too-officious clerks had not interfered, what further interesting information might I not have learned from him while we were in such perfect *rapport!*

It seems longer ago than yesterday—barely twenty-four hours since—that I saw him, a fine, full-grown young snake of the genus *Crotalus adamenteus*, lying in a cage much too small for him, awaiting with a number of other reptiles my daily inspection at the museum.

He was dull and stupid from his long imprisonment in such contracted quarters; so, as I had no other cage at hand, I turned him loose upon a large table, intending to watch him closely, and to return him to his former confinement at the first sign of ugliness on his part.

At first he seemed half asleep, but as I kept my eyes firmly fixed upon his, which never wavered for an instant from their steady gaze into mine, I saw their expression of lazy indifference change to that of sullen anger, and he slowly coiled and uncoiled his long length of body, as if relaxing his cramped muscles for the fray he evidently anticipated. Still I sat motionless, for like a flash the thought had come to me that now was the time for testing what I had long believed possible—the absolute control of the reptile will by that of man. In short, I had determined to hypnotize his snakeship.

With this object in view, I concentrated all the force of my mind and will upon him, and ere long was delighted to observe that he was growing restless and uneasy under my influence. By degrees he became quiet, his anger melted, and his eyes took on a look of such piteous, beseeching appeal that my heart was touched, and although relentless determination, upheld by the

alluring hope of ultimate success, forbade my yielding to such weakness, I had almost succumbed to the softer emotion, and granted him his dumbly-desired release, when suddenly, as if but just comprehending my design, he with apparent great effort shook off his growing torpor, then, deliberately coiling his long, supple body, reared his proud head and bade me defiance. All my mental vanity responded to the challenge so intelligently expressed, and I braced myself with all the nerve I possessed to oppose him.

How long we thus confronted each other in this unprecedented contest of wills I am unable to say; but my strained eyeballs burned and throbbed, while his eyes grew longer, narrower, yet ever brighter and brighter, the fixedness of their gaze becoming always more and more piercing, till they seemed to fairly stab mine with their intensity. After a while I felt my senses slowly but surely yielding to a power stronger even than that of my own will. My sight became blurred; I could no longer distinguish the outlines of the snake; where his eyes had been were two glowing coals, and splashes of molten gold floating in a sea of shining black took the place of his dark, yellow-spotted skin; harsh, vibrant noises reverberated in my ears. I could feel his heart beating within my own, and chilling the sluggish blood in my veins; still the sensation was not unpleasant, and I had no desire to escape my thraldom. All at once the discordant sounds ceased, and from far off came the faint notes of a weird, fantastic melody, with an occasional sound as of castanets; nearer and nearer it came, until it located itself in the brain of the snake, whence it again emanated and merged into mine. I now felt myself swiftly succumbing to a mighty power I could no longer repel, even had I so desired.

With still sufficient consciousness to appreciate the humor of the situation, I realized that the tables were turned. The snake that I had so confidently attempted to hypnotize was rapidly subjecting me to his own superior hypnotic force.

The music grew fainter, fainter, then lapsed into silence.

Time and space are annihilated.

I find myself on a huge rock jutting out over a narrow creek, a dense forest above, below, and all around as far as the eye can reach. It is twilight, and I, a young rattlesnake, am lying beside my mother, trying by my mute caresses to console her for the death of my father, whose body is stretched out straight and stiff close by us. Our deadliest enemy, man, has shot a bullet through his brain and mutilated his remains by depriving him of his venerable rattle. Oh, if man must do foul murder, can he not be satisfied without committing this last desecration!

My mother refuses to leave her mate, and throughout the summer night she lies there bemoaning his fate, while telling me of her other sad losses. I am the only one left to her of a large and promising brood, all killed by cowardly man during the temporary absence of my father early in the season; and I, too, would undoubtedly have met the same fate at the same time, but that, being the youngest, I kept always close by my mother, and at the first approach of danger crawled down her throat, and was thus borne by her to a place of safety when she found herself unable to save the others. She and my father had guarded me most carefully since then, but now that I have attained my full growth, have reached the dignity of a rattle, and moreover have lost through my father's death my natural protector, she charges me to be always on the watch for our enemy; that every encounter between mankind and myself must mean a duel to the death, and I must prepare to strike on sight. She also admonishes me ever to bear in mind that I am a member of the royal family of *Crotalidæ*, to be true to my ancestral pride, and never under any circumstances to resort to mean, manly artifice, but to give fair warning by sounding my rattle, for none but a craven would strike without granting his adversary a chance to defend his life. I proudly assure my mother that I shall remain faithful to the teachings of herself

and my honored father, and will endeavor to conduct myself according to the traditions of our race.

With the coming of the morn we creep back to our den among the lichen-covered rocks, only to return again each night to keep our vigil with the dead, till finally my mother's grief wears out her frail body, and I am left alone.

For a long time I am inconsolable, and at the close of the summer I hide myself away for my long sleep, almost hoping I may never wake again; but when the dreary winter comes to an end, and the frogs far down in the creek begin piping their spring anthems, I wend my way as of old to the hanging rock which I remember gets the first warm rays of the morning sun. There are no traces left of last year's tragedy, nor am I allowed to grieve in solitude over the sorrows of the past, for there before me is a lovely young female, hardly yet arrived at the dignity of snakehood, languidly sunning herself. She is not conscious of my presence as I pause on the threshold to admire her graceful writhings and twistings, and I have ample time to take in all the beauty of her sleek, triangular head, the slim, diamond-spotted, dark-brown body, and creamy-white breast, before she turns her large, brilliant eyes to meet my enraptured gaze. It is a case of mutual love at first sight, as I am immediately aware, in spite of the coy bashfulness that causes her to turn aside and endeavor to escape. At my earnest entreaty, she consents to remain and listen to my wooing, and after a short but blissful courtship becomes my mate.

Time now passes like a happy dream, or a foretaste of that future state where we are taught all shall be love and harmony; where all creeping things shall find the justice and consideration denied us in this, and where man shall be powerless to harm us.

Side by side we glide through tall grass and sweet-smelling wild flowers that nod and smile with loving sympathy in the warm summer sunshine; and at night, still side by side, we creep into our rocky den, there to

await the coming of the morn, when we again issue forth to greet the god of day.

How beautiful is life! Merely to exist is joy unfathomable!

Hateful man and his tyranny are almost forgotten.

Again winter's oblivion comes and goes. Once more awakening earth arouses us to life and action. We make our annual pilgrimage to the rock, and dedicate a brood of precious young snakes—our first-born—to the life-giving sun god.

Our happiness is even greater than before, though more subdued as we realize our greater responsibility, and I begin again to dread with an infinite dread the man-monster when I look upon my unsuspecting little ones.

Is it a prescience of evil which lies so heavily on my soul this morning as I bid my little family good-by and creep forth to reconnoitre before allowing them to venture into possible danger? I have not gone far beyond their sight and hearing when I suddenly discover that I am entrapped; firmly held in a net manipulated at some distance away—out of reach of my fangs—by our ever-treacherous foe. I scorn to beg for mercy, even though the thought of my loved ones drives me almost frantic.

I sound my rattle. Did it ever make so loud a noise before?

Ratatatatatatat-t-t-t!

Will some friendly *Crotalus* hear it and come to my assistance? If I could but reach that upright coward I would bury my fangs so deep in his flesh that never more could he harm reptile!

Ah, he approaches nearer, still closer—ratatatatatatatatatat-t-t-t! Hiss-s-s-s-s!!!

. . . . . .

When I awoke to consciousness of self again, I saw gathered around me a crowd of people, among whom was a physician of my acquaintance. I heard the latter say, "There, he will do now, but it would be better for

him to be taken home at once and kept very quiet for a few days, until he shall have recovered from the severe nervous shock he has sustained." Then I saw the snake lying dead on the floor, and I knew without their telling me what had happened. Some one had entered the room, and seeing me sitting at the table with a live and particularly lively rattlesnake before me, had killed the innocent reptile in a spasm of dread lest it should harm me; adding another murder to the long list of unnecessary crimes for which mankind must some day answer.

However, I feel grateful to the physician for confining me to my room for a while; for by his mandate he has granted me the opportunity of repeating my experiment here, where, with locked door, I may defy interruption, and for which purpose I have just written to a man who has often supplied subjects for my work at the museum to send me at once the largest, finest rattlesnake to be found on the banks of Rock Creek.

Mention of this suit will not be found in law libraries. It was furnished by a French writer, Raphael Lightone, and was translated for the *Overland Monthly*, from which it is republished in ROMANCE.

A SINGULAR LAWSUIT.

JEAN RENARD was a poor tiler of Grenouilleville who had a wife and two children. Jean was no advocate of polygamy. He found one wife quite enough, for La Louise, as she was called, often led him a hard life.

Jean worked with a will from morning to night; he was full of courage and strength, and yet, in spite of all the hours he spent on the roofs in company with love-lorn cats, he barely managed to eke out a living.

"The two youngsters, their mother, and me," said he, "that makes four, and four stomachs to fill is not a small affair; it means: to work, Jean!"

And work he did, poor man, and yet never knew what it meant to have a few spare coins laid by in the corner of a drawer.

The winter of 1879–1880, cruelly rigorous, as will be remembered, taxed the slater rudely. No work to be had; to warm his blood he was obliged, from time to time, to whip his arms back and forth; but work also would have kept his blood in circulation, and in addition would have brought in coins for dinners and breakfasts.

Often, at this time, Jean Renard looked up at the high steeple of the old church of Grenouilleville. In many places the ruined slates had fallen away piece by piece. What a lot of work there was to be done on that spire!

Of course, it was dangerous work. Jean knew that, but he knew his trade too.

Long ago, also, the cock that perched on the summit of this spire had been blown down during a storm. The curé had often been asked by his people to reinstate this cock in his high station, and had always replied

that he asked nothing better, if he could manage to do so without its costing him anything.

Jean Renard had an inspiration: "Suppose I propose to the curé to put back his cock for nothing, if he will give me the work that is to be done on the steeple."

But the curé was a miser, and he replied that it made no difference to him if the steeple was leaky, as he did not sleep there.

"Repair as much as you want to," said he to Jean, "but I will not give you a cent."

The slater found this too little, and gave up the affair, keeping, however, a grudge against the curé.

At about this epoch there was a change in the Mayoralty of Grenouilleville. The new magistrate inaugurated his rule by asking the curé to repaint the flag, covered with rust, which crowned the steeple.

"But, Monsieur le Maire," objected the curé, "you do not ask me if I have the money to pay for this work."

"Do not bother yourself about that, Monsieur le Curé," replied the mayor; "have the flag repainted, and the municipality shall pay."

"Very well, then, since you wish it," replied the curé, none too happy at seeing the national colors float over his steeple.

True to his principles, the curé beat down the price, franc by franc, in making his bargain with Jean Renard; and when it was concluded, the priest added, "And it is well understood that putting back the cock is included in the bargain."

"Oh, no," said Jean, "that is not understood at all. That, you know, sir, doubles the labor; and also, the cock has to be put much higher than I mount to paint the flag. Placing the cock is a perilous job—so perilous that it is my life you are asking me to risk for nothing. No."

"Yes, my friend," said the curé, with an unctuous smile; "you will do that for the love of God."

"Do you say masses for the love of God, Monsieur le Curé? I consent to replace the cock, but you will add fifty francs to your price; it is worth that."

"Fifty francs!" cried the priest. "The deuce I will! How you run on! See here, Jean, once you are up there, it won't be much of an effort to go a few steps higher."

"But if misfortune befalls me, do you think you, for the love of God, will care for and bring up my children?"

"Come! come! No more talking. I'll give you ten francs."

"Ah, Monsieur le Curé, you take advantage of my poverty. You know I must earn a living, and so you get the better of me. In short, I accept for ten francs more."

The curé, delighted at his success, spread the good news through the town: At last the cock was going to be in place once more!

. . . . . .

It was December, and the bad weather still persisted. Jean, therefore, was forced to wait several days before undertaking his dangerous ascent. At length the rain ceased; by night the clouds had gone, and next morning all the roofs were covered with frost.

"Clear weather," said the slater. "I can go to work to-day."

All the good folks of Grenouilleville were assembled in front of the church, in the large square, to see Jean Renard hoist himself to the top of the steeple. He had in his belt three bottles containing red, white, and blue paints for the flag, and to his back was attached the cock, resplendent in new gilding. He entered the church to pass by a window at the base of the spire.

When he appeared, throwing one of his ropes over the first hook of the steeple, there was a murmur of consternation from the watching crowd; but terror became paroxysm when Jean, near the middle of his ascent, almost lost his equilibrium by the breaking of an iron eaten by rust. The upturned faces were pale with emotion, but the dexterous slater quickly grasped a higher hook.

Nevertheless, he was long in mounting. It was

nearly three o'clock in the afternoon when he touched the base of the cross at the top of the steeple. He lashed himself fast thereto, feet and body, and began his first work—the painting of the flag. In about half an hour cheers and applause broke from the crowd: the national colors floated over the steeple.

The hardest part, though, was yet to be done: the cock had to go up. Two feet more to mount; and to crown the danger, it was the cross that had to be climbed, that is to say, a mere bar of iron.

In December it is soon night; already the watchers saw but a faintly outlined form amid the mists of twilight, and they began to grow uneasy. How would poor Jean Renard manage now? He could no longer see to work, and was now in greater danger than ever.

Suddenly a small light showed in the darkening night. Jean Renard, being a careful man, had thought to carry with him a candle. Soon nothing more could be seen but that tiny light, gleaming on high like a star lost in the clouds, and the anxious crowd began to disperse. Jean continued working.

. . . . . .

On the morrow, at dawn, the early risers of Grenouilleville saw a frightful sight.

Jean Renard hung, head downward, from the top of the steeple, his feet still held by his ropes.

The unfortunate man had doubtless lost his balance, and in falling his work apron had turned backward, thus concealing his face. He no longer moved; dead, probably, some hours since.

The curé, who was at once apprised, expressed his sentiments in intolerable form:

"Unlucky fellow! Well, at least, he had put back the cock!"

"Yes," was replied, "but we cannot leave the corpse up there; it must be got down."

"That is true," said the priest; "it must be brought down, but who will do it?"

"That, Monsieur le Curé, is your business. Get workmen from the city, if you must, at no matter what cost;

the body of Jean Renard must not remain up there."

Get workmen from the city—that was very expensive, and the curé hesitated, but it had to be done. Just then it was learned in the village that the priest had pushed his avarice to the point of trying to get his weather-cock repaired for nothing, and feelings of aversion for him developed in the breasts of his parishioners.

A subscription was opened for the orphans of the tiler, and the same day a hundred francs were paid in; little, but the people of Grenouilleville were not rich. A man had gone to the city, but they asked two hundred francs, and the curé found that ridiculously exorbitant. So the next day, the corpse being still suspended from the steeple, funeral ceremonies were held in front of the great church door, draped for the occasion; and all Grenouilleville joined in the last prayers for Jean Renard.

But to inter the body, it had to be got down from its lofty perch. The fellow-citizens of the slater this time showed great decision. They would have the body, and if necessary, would force the curé himself to go and get it.

When that person left the church, he found himself confronted by a threatening crowd.

"No, Monsieur le Curé. He shall not stay up there; it is an outrage!"

"My good friends, I am quite of your opinion; so get him down!"

"You shall go yourself, since you refuse to pay some one else to go," and already the most audacious, the anti-clerical faction, pushed the curé backward toward the church.

Thoroughly alarmed, he at length exclaimed:

"It is impossible; I do not know how to climb on roofs. I'll pay! I'll pay!"

"They ask two hundred francs to come from the city," cried the men on all sides.

"Oh!—but I'll give them!"

"Stop! Stop!" cried a voice. "I'll do the job for

a hundred francs," and a man forced his way toward the curé, through the amazed villagers.

"Jean Renard! Jean Renard!" burst from their lips.

. . . . . .

It was indeed Jean. He explained in a few words how he had planned to trick the curé, who meant to get the better of him. After his work was finished, he came down, entered the bell tower, and dressed a wooden figure in his clothes; he then remounted and hung his effigy from the steeple.

But effigy or not, it was a dishonor to Grenouilleville, suspended from their church spire, and must remain there no longer.

Jean Renard climbed up and unhooked the supposititious corpse, which fell upon the square beneath, amid general cheers and laughter.

The curé thus got the worst of the bargain; his money, after all, paid for the weather-cock.

. . . . . .

This was not the end of the matter, however.

"I gave Jean Renard a first-class funeral service," thought the curé, "and he shall pay for it."

He then began suit against the slater, who, naturally, refused to pay.

"I did not ask you for burial service, Monsieur le Curé."

"None asks that, my son, and yet all finish that way. You were thought dead——"

"But I was not, happily; and also, in that case, it is never the customer who pays. Carry your bill to my heirs."

"To your heirs! You have none, since you are not dead."

"Then why did you bury me?"

"But, unhappy man, I prayed for the salvation of your soul!"

"The salvation of my soul! Pray for the salvation of your own, for I am not sure that I have a soul."

"Heretic!" murmured the priest.

"The cause is heard," said, in his turn, the justice of the peace, who gave judgment as follows:

"Considering that Jean Renard tricked the curé, but that the curé had first tricked Jean Renard;

"Considering that the trade of a priest is to pray for the salvation of souls, as it is that of slaters to set up weather-cocks;

"But, whereas the slater could no more have set up a weather-cock that had not fallen down than the curé could pray for the salvation of a soul that was not in peril;

"Whereas, finally, Jean Renard affirms that he has no soul, and in that case no use for prayers;

"We, therefore, reject the suit of the Curé de Grenouilleville, and do condemn him to pay the costs thereof."

And all Grenouilleville laughs yet.

The curé's money was put to good use by Jean Renard. He no longer climbs steeples. He lives by the seaside now, from whence he frequently sends me a basket of fine oysters. So I owed him this story.

The title of this story should prejudice no one. The sweet humanizing influence of a woman's presence was never more conclusively shown than by the writer, who is unknown but who contributed the tale to *All the Year Round*.

WICKED MARY MUSGRAVE.

"NINE carats if it's a blessed one."

"Scale 'im, and ye'll find he's a half better. Christmas puddings! What a bit o' glass! Clear es a bottle o' gin, an' flawless es the Pope! Tommy Dartmoor, ye're in luck, s'welp me never ef ye ain't, an' that a brilliant yer can show the polis and not get time fer."

Tommy Dartmoor, who owed his surname to a crown establishment within the restraining walls of which he had once enjoyed a temporary residence, growled out a recommendation to "stow that;" and then added: "Boys, we'll wet this. Trek to Werstein's."

Forthwith a crowd of dirty, tanned diggers turned their heads in the direction of Gustav Werstein's American Bar, and walked toward it as briskly as the heat and their weariness would admit of. The Israelite saw them coming, straightened himself out of the half doze in which he had passed the baking afternoon, stopped down the Boer tobacco in the porcelain bowl of his long-stemmed pipe with stumpy forefinger, and, twisting a cork off his screw, stood in readiness.

"Name yer pizons, boys, an' get outside 'em, wishin' all good luck to R'yal Straight. R'yal Straight bein' the name o' this yer stone given by Thomas D. Hesquire, original diskiverer and present perprietor."

The orders were given—Bass at five shillings a bottle; small champagne—*née* gooseberry—at five pounds; Cape smoke at two shillings per two fingers—and at a given signal there was an inarticulate roar from dusty throats, an inversion of tumblers over thirsty mouths, and a second inversion over the ground to show that all the liquid contents had disappeared.

Satan, the one cat, and only domestic pet of the camp, saw that there was a general treat going on, and bust-

ling up for his drink took a can of condensed milk at six shillings. Other diggers came trooping in as the news spread, and Tommy Dartmoor, who was rapidly becoming mellow, for he drank half a tumbler of raw whiskey with every one who nodded to him, stood them refreshments galore, while the greasy Jew began to see visions of his adopted fatherland in the near distance.

Without, the mining camp was deserted.

It was just upon sundown, and the bloated yellow disc was balancing on the horizon. The Scholar—an ex-Christchurch man, who had driven tandem to the dogs in his salad days, and had then had other troubles which had driven him out of England—the Scholar pictured it as "for all the world like a big hot frying-pan."

Tommy, as we have seen, was standing unlimited treat; but although Tommy was drunk, he was not drunk enough to waste liquor on a Kaffir. He might drink himself insensible, he might buy liquor merely to pour it onto the thirsty earth—he had, as a point of fact, done both more than once—but it never could be said that Thomas Dartmoor had wasted the heaven-sent liquids dispensed by the hands of Herr Gustav Werstein on a mere heathen. He certainly might not be a good man—he did not set up as such—but he was far too much of a Christian to commit that enormity.

So the Kaffirs, except those who had supplies of their own, kept sober and peaceful while the higher order of the human race at Big Stone Hole, after the manner of their kind, began to squabble. It was natural for them to do so, perhaps, for the weather was hot, and the liquors, for the most part, more so; and under these circumstances men do not always cast about them long for a *casus belli*. One or two minor brawls opened the ball, and Herr Gustav, scenting battle in the air, drew from a locker a card, which he balanced against the bottles on a shelf above his head. It read thus:

GENTS IS REKESTED TO SHOOT
CLEAR OF THE BARR-KEP
BROCKIN GLAS MAY BE PADE FOR
AT COST PRISE.

and had been written for the German by a gentleman who had had some experience in Forty Rod Gulch, Sierra Nevada. The action elicted a contemptuous laugh from one or two of the new hands, but the oldsters began shifting sundry articles which depended from their belts into positions from which they might be handled at the shortest notice; and the black cat, more wise than any of them, having drunk his all, stalked solemnly out into the security of the darkness.

The sun went down—went out with a click, some one declared—and, as no twilight interposed between daylight and darkness in the country which Big Stone Hole ornamented, Herr Gustav lit his two paraffine lamps. Neither boasted of more than a one-inch wick, and as their glasses were extremely smoky, the illumination was not brilliant; but it sufficed to show the flushed, angry faces of a couple of men standing in the centre of the room with all the others clustered round, watching eagerly. One was the Scholar. The other was a burly giant, whose missing left little finger caused him to be nicknamed the Cripple. About what they had originally fallen out was not clear to any one, to themselves least of all. As the case stood when the second lamp was lit, Scholar had called Cripple a something-or-othered liar, and Cripple, who was not inventive, had retorted by stigmatizing Scholar as another. Further recriminations followed, and their pistols were drawn; but as the audience had a strong objection to indiscriminate shooting, by which it was not likely to benefit, the belligerents were seized. No one was unsportsmanlike enough to wish to stop the fight, and Jockey Bill, giving voice to the general wish of the meeting, proposed that the gents be fixed up agin a couple o' posts outside, where they might let daylight into each other without lead-poisoning casual spectators.

The motion was acted upon, and after rectifying a slight omission on the Cripple's part—he had forgotten to put caps on the nipples of his revolver—the pair of them were sat upon upturned barrels, some ten yards apart, each with a lamp at his feet, and told to begin

when they saw fit to do so. The swarthy, bearded diggers grouped themselves on either side, and the cat, emerging from his retreat, scrambled on to the shoulder of one of them, fully as curious as the rest to "see the shootin'." It was a weird sight, take it all around—dust, scorched grass, empty tins, rude hovels, piles of *débris*, African moonlight—yet, except perhaps in the eyes of the newest comers, there was nothing strange in it. The others were too wrapped up in what was going to take place to see anything quaint in their every-day surroundings. There was no theatre in the camp. The little impromptu drama riveted all attention. But before the duel commenced, a galloping horse, which had approached over the grassy veldt unnoticed during the little excitement, drew up with a crash between the two combatants, and its rider, raising his hand to command attention, cried:

"Boys, there's a white woman comin'!"

"A white woman!" chorused thirty voices in various tones of disbelief. "What, here? White woman comin' here, Dan?"

And then some one inquired if she was a Boer.

"Boer—no," replied Dan; "English—English as I am; leastwise Englisher, bein' Amurrican born myself. Overtook her at Hottentot Drift. Thort I'd spur on an' tell yer. We'd do wi' a clean-up, some on us."

Dan spoke indistinctly, as a bullet had disarranged some of his teeth a short while since; but his words had a wonderful effect.

Each man began instinctively to tidy himself. The would-be duellists, forgetting their recent quarrel, stuck their revolvers in their belts and followed the general example. The Cripple hied him to the store, and, after breaking down the door, abstracted the only blacking-brush in the camp—putting down a sovereign on the counter in exchange for it—and set to polishing his high boots as if a fortune were dependent on their brightness. The Scholar bought Herr Gustav's white shirt for a fiver, threatening to murder its owner if he did not render it up. And Partridge, a good man from Nor-

folk, with a regrettable weakness for shooting other people's game, induced a friend to denude him of his flowing locks by means of a clasp-knife and a hunk of wood, as no scissors were procurable.

The wardrobes of Big Stone Hole were stocked more with a view to strict utility than variety or ornamentation, and the slender resources of the store utterly gave out under the sudden strain that was put upon them. In every direction grimy, unkempt men might be seen attempting to beautify themselves. Here was one enduring agonies from a razor that would scarcely whittle a stick; here another recalling the feel of a cake of soap; there a great fellow pulling faces as he struggled to get the teeth of a comb into his shock of hair; there another brushing the clay from his moleskin trousers with a tuft of stiff grass.

It seemed to these men ages since they had last seen a woman in the flesh—Kaffir women don't count; they are not women; merely Kaffirs—and, with the natural instinct of males of every species, they set about pluming their feathers.

These operations, though speedy as might be, were necessarily prolonged, for most of the men required several buckets of water over the head before they felt fit for such unaccustomed exercises, and they were scarcely finished before the creaking of wheels and the cries of the voorloper as he urged his oxen announced that the wagon was within earshot. Up it came, the great tilt gleaming white in the moonlight, and every eye was fixed expectantly on the dark chasm within. The driver, puffed up with his own importance, cracked his long whip and deigned not to notice the men whom he usually greeted with a friendly hail, and the Hottentot boy ahead, imitating his master, vouchsafed no explanation. With more deathly slowness than usual did the lumbering vehicle crawl along until the tired cattle pulled up before the door of the American Bar. Then there was a rush and a bit of a scuffle for the honor of handing the woman out. The Cripple was the fortunate man, and after assisting her to the ground,

waved his tattered hat toward the gleaming open doorway. But he did not speak. Words were beyond him. Indeed, the diggers, who were none of them particularly remarkable for taciturnity as a general thing, seemed with one exception to be stricken dumb. But the Scholar proved himself equal to the occasion, and with courtly phrase bade the new-comer welcome to the camp. He had always been a popular man among women in his palmier days, though openly holding rather a poor opinion of them; and as the one before him now was neat of speech and comely of form, he was not at all averse to enjoying her society and conversation.

"I should be much obliged if you would direct me to a hotel," she said, after taking a look around the cheap gaudiness of the saloon.

"I am sorry to say that we have no hotel here as yet, Miss—er——"

"Musgrave. Miss Mary Musgrave"—with a little bow. "But you alarm me. I heard that a German had started a hotel here."

"No, there is nothing but this. That"—pointing to Herr Gustav, who was regarding the new-comer with an evil eye—"that is the German."

Miss Musgrave appeared distressed.

"Then where can I go?" she asked. "Are there any lodgings to be had?"

"The lady may have my place," chorused three eager voices, and every man in the room repeated the offer.

She thanked them with a pretty smile and one comprehensive bow, and looked up at the Scholar for help.

"I would offer you my hut if it were not such a wretched one. But, as it is, I should advise you to take this man's"—and he pointed to Tommy Dartmoor.

"Why, mine's twenty carats better than his'n," exclaimed the Cripple.

"And mine better'n either," growled Dan.

"Mine's the best of the lot."

"No, it isn't, mine is," yelled others, till there was a general roar, which caused Miss Musgrave to look

frightened and shrink nearer to the Scholar, and that gentleman to raise his hand for silence.

"Look here," said he, 'we'll pick out the twelve best, and their owners can cut with one another from a pack of cards."

After some discussion twelve were settled upon, but the number was immediately raised to thirteen to prevent Jockey Bill disgracing the camp by shooting before a lady. A pack of cards was placed on the bar and each man chose one, holding his selection face downward till all were ready. Then the Scholar said, "Turn," and there were exhibited five aces, two kings, a queen, three knaves and two smaller cards. This was awkward, to say the least of it, and while sarcastic laughter rippled among the spectators, there was an instinctive movement of right hands toward the back of the belt on the part of each of the thirteen.

But the Scholar's voice, full of remonstrance, said, "Boys, you're being looked at," and there was a regretful sigh or two, but no bloodshed.

Miss Musgrave gazed inquiringly from one to another, and the Scholar, laying his hand confidentially on her arm, whispered something in her ear. She smiled, whispered back, and was answered, and then, stripping off a pair of well-fitting fawn gloves, she took the cards in a pretty little white hand, and dealt out one to each of the competitors with charming clumsiness.

"Ain't touched a keard afore, bless her," whispered Euchre Buck, giving his neighbor Dan a nudge in the ribs to call attention to this wonderful piece of girlish ignorance. "Square a deal es George Washington mought ha' made." Then, as the greasy pasteboards were turned up, and his neighbor was handed the ace of clubs, he raised his voice and yelled out: "Bully for you, Dan! Cut away an' clar yer cabin out."

Away scampered Dan out into the darkness, with the rest of the crew at his heels. Their home comforts were very small, poor fellows; but each gave of his best, though the gifts were often incongruous enough. In half an hour the cabin was fitted out with a small

cracked looking-glass, two combs, an old hair-brush—still wet from the wash—a pail, a frying-pan, three kettles, two three-legged stools, and so many blankets that some were requisitioned to carpet the floor. The whole crowd accompanied Miss Musgrave to her door and gave her a cheer by way of good-night. She bowed to them, smiling her thanks, and looking, as they thought, entrancingly lovely as she stood there, with the pale moonbeams falling full on her.

Then she turned to go in, but as Euchre Buck stepped forward with an admonishing cough, she waited and looked round at him.

"Miss," said he, holding out a big revolver in his hard fist, "you take this yer gun, an' ef any one whistles, or otherwise disturbs you, let a hole into him straight away, an' we'll see him buried decent."

But Miss Musgrave courteously and with profuse thanks refused the offer, and saying that she had perfect confidence in all who were around her, gave Euchre Buck a bewitching smile, went inside and closed the door after her.

Then the diggers returned to Gustav Werstein's American Bar and discussed the new arrival.

"I knows Noomarket, an' Hascot, an' Hepsom, an' all the places where swells goes in England," said Jockey Bill, enthusiastically; "but never one come there as pretty as she, stop my license if ther' did."

"Grand eyes, hain't she?" said Tommy Dartmoor. "Regular fust-water uns. Here's to 'em."

"And—a—hoof! See it peep below her gownd. S'welp me ef it wer' es big es my 'bacca box!"

"An' 'er close, gentlemen! Made to measure, every thread on 'em, I allow."

"She's a lady, boys," exclaimed he who had offered to see after a funeral, "a reg'lar, slap-up, high-toned, blow-yer-eyes-don't-touch-me lady; an' as she sees fit to do the civil to this feller"—striking himself on the chest—"he's just going to drop his professional name, an' arsk yer to call him Mister Samuel K. Gregson, Esquire. Play on that."

"Lady be hanged," began a more refined voice than any that had yet spoken. "Not much! I tell you—Hullo!"

The Scholar stopped suddenly and swung his fist round behind him, but a stern voice said:

"Throw up yer hands or ye'll never get yer boots off again. We got the drop on yer this time."

The ex-Christchurch man saw four black, powder-grimed tubes levelled at him, and, after hesitating a moment, clasped his hands behind his head and looked at his adversaries unflinchingly.

"What next?" he demanded.

"Down on yer knees an' swaller that."

"I'll be hanged if I kneel to any man."

"Shot, Scholar; not hanged, shot," suggested Euchre Buck, blandly.

"Shoot away," returned the other, indifferently. "I'm about sick of this place already, and as a woman sent me here, a woman may as well send me on. Steady your muzzle, Tommy. Drinking's making your hand shake."

There was a dead silence for a minute or so, each expecting one of the others to fire, and each being unwilling, through admiration of the Scholar's pluck, to pull trigger himself. Then Euchre Buck, without lowering his weapon, asked: "Will yer take it back if we let yer stand?"

The Scholar appeared to consider how far this concession was damaging to his dignity, and then saying, "Oh, if you are anxious about it, I'll admit that I may have been mistaken," stuffed his hands into his pockets and walked out.

Next morning the inhabitants of Big Stone Hole were startled by reading this announcement outside the cabin which Dan had resigned to Miss Musgrave:

SINGING AND MUSIC TAUGHT.
LITERARY WORK DONE.

It was printed on a card, which was affixed to the door by means of a drawing pin, and from within came

the sound of a contralto voice singing to a guitar accompaniment. One by one the male residents of Big Stone Hole drew near to that iron-roofed hut and stopped to listen; but after commenting on the innovation in gleeful whispers—for guitar had never twanged in that part of Africa before—they moved on to their work. No consideration could cause them to neglect that. They might fritter away the dull, rough gems when they had found them, but the lust of handling diamonds once was the strongest passion they knew. And so the day's toil was not curtailed; but at the conclusion Miss Musgrave had an application for instruction in music from every man in the camp with one exception. This one defaulter was Euchre Buck. He owned to having no ear for music—thereby exhibiting more honesty than many of the others—and confessed to knowing only two tunes, one of which was "Hail, Columbia," and the other—wasn't; and so he said he wanted some "literary work done." He proposed to Miss Musgrave that she should write a history of his life at half a guinea a page, thereby—'cute Yankee that he was—thinking to appropriate the whole of her time.

But embarrassed by all these calls upon her, and obviously unable to satisfy each of them, Miss Musgrave turned for help to the Scholar, whom she appeared to regard as her special adviser; and he, promising a solution of the difficulty in half an hour, drew off the whole crowd to the American Bar, where the question was thrashed out in all its points.

It was clearly evident that Miss Musgrave could not surrender to each individual the whole of her evening, even if any one had been willing to let his neighbor monopolize it, which no one was, and therefore it was necessary to formulate some scheme by which the outcome of her talents might be distributed over a larger area. But what the scheme would be was not settled all in a minute. One man wanted to hear her sing, another to hear her talk, another was willing to give five pounds an hour for the privilege of talking to her. After a lengthened discussion, which was excited

throughout and at times verged on the warlike, it was decided to effect a compromise—subject, of course, to Miss Musgrave's inclinations—and a deputation was sent to learn her views on the subject.

There was no assembly room in the place, excepting Werstein's saloon—which, of course, was not available for such a purpose—and so it was proposed to her, with much humility, that she should take her position in the evenings on a chair outside her hut and there discourse such vocal and instrumental music as she saw fit, interlarding the same with friendly conversation. What was she to talk about? Anything—absolutely anything. They didn't mind what it was so long as they heard her voice. Five shillings, the committee had decided, was to be paid by every man who came within earshot. And any one who wanted a free list was requested to argue the matter out with Euchre Buck.

This call upon her powers seemed to take Miss Musgrave aback.

"I have never sung in public," she pleaded, rather nervously. "Indeed, my voice is not good enough for it; really it isn't. Only I thought I could teach a little, perhaps, and that is why I came here. You see, mother is an invalid, and we were so poor that——"

"Miss," broke in Jockey Bill, "call it ten bob a 'ead, and just 'um to us."

"Oh, no, Mr. William, it was not the money that I thought about; indeed, five shillings would be far too much. But if you think that I should be able to amuse you at all, I would do my very best—believe me, I would."

"Miss," growled Dan, with a clumsy endeavor to chase away her diffidence, "all we asks is fer you to sit near us fer a spell. Ef you sings or plays, we'd be proud; ef you just looks an' talks, we'd be pleased."

So in the end Miss Musgrave yielded to the wishes of the community, and the nightly conclave in the American Bar became so much a thing of the past that Gustav Werstein was heard to threaten another emigra-

tion. The songs were to the diggers new, and yet not new. There was nothing of the music-hall type about them; they were nearly all old-fashioned ditties. She sang to them of "Barbara Allen" and "Sally in Our Alley;" she gave them "Cheer, Boys, Cheer," and called for a chorus; she sang the "Message," the "Arrow and the Song;" and she brought back memories of other days when Africa was to them a mere geographical expression—of days when that something had not happened which had sent them away from home.

Sunday came, the fifth day after her arrival, and it differed from the usual Sabbath of Big Stone Hole. Sunday had been observed before by the biggest drinking bout of the week, and a summary settlement of the previous six days' dispute. Now, to the huge surprise of the Kaffirs, and to the still greater surprise of themselves, these diamond diggers sang hymns at intervals during the day, and refrained from indulging in the orthodox carouse until after Miss Musgrave had retired for the night. It was a wonderful change.

During the next week a fall of earth took place in Tommy Dartmoor's claim. Two Kaffirs were killed; and when the proprietor himself was extricated from the *débris* of blue clay which held him down, he was found to have a broken arm, besides other serious injuries.

"Don't let on to her," he managed to gasp out to his rescuers, wishing to spare Miss Musgrave's nerves a shock.

But she saw the men bearing him to his hut, joined them, and insisted on being installed as sole nurse forthwith.

Twenty other men would willingly have broken an arm for such a reward; and the recklessness displayed during the next few days was something awful. But she saw that, too—little escaped those big blue eyes—and ascribing it to drink, gave a pretty strong lecture on the bibulous habits of Big Stone Hole at her next concert.

There was an earnest meeting in the American Bar that night, at which the following motion was put and carried unanimously: "On and after this date, any

drunken man is liable to be shot at sight, unless his friends can prove that he has dug over three carats of diamonds during the day." And then, like other reformers, they went on to more sweeping measures. "Only knife-fighting to take place in the camp. All disputes with pistols, unless of a very pressing nature, to be settled out of earshot of Dan's house." There were even some hints of appointing a closing time for the saloon. "It would make the place so much more like home." But the promoter eventually withdrew his suggestion, as it was justly felt that such a motion would interfere with the liberty of the subject too much. But a storm of cheers burst forth when it was proposed to transfer the diamond safe from Werstein's keeping to a corner of the new goddess' shrine.

Even Satan joined in the general adoration, and, more favored than the rest, enjoyed at times a chaste salute from Miss Musgrave's ripe red lips.

Never, in so short a space of time, had a community been more changed for the better than was that of Big Stone Hole. Never had woman's humanizing influence made itself more clearly felt. The azure cloud of blasphemy that hung over the workings and the rest of the camp was replaced again by the normal dust. The diggers took to washing themselves at least once a week, and at times even indulged in a clean shirt. Empty provision cans, "dead marines," and other *débris* were thrown to the backs of the huts instead of being allowed to lie in unsightly heaps before the doors. Each man tried to beautify the inside of his shanty to the best of his means and ideas, for there was no knowing when the only "she" would take it into her pretty, capricious head to pay a call. In this latter line the Scholar had a decided pull. Education had taught him taste; necessity, handiness; and by aid of the two he transformed his rude dwelling into something approaching the rooms in which he used to dawdle away the happy hours, time ago. It was partly drawing-room, partly curiosity shop. The walls were stencilled with pigments made from colored earths and

hung with prints in Oxford frames, with a few pieces of quaint delf, with African weapons and oddments; the floor was carpeted with mats deftly woven from colored reeds and grasses, on which luxurious easy-chairs and a veritable tea-table—whittled from local timber by a deft bowie—stood in orthodox confusion. The bed seemed nothing more than a sofa, while all domestic instruments were relegated to the comparative privacy of an extempore outhouse. Cups, saucers, spoons, *et ea omnia*, appeared as if by magician's call, and one blazing afternoon the news flashed round the diamond pits that Miss Musgrave was "taking afternoon tea with the Scholar."

It acted as a death-blow to several hopes, for though she had as yet markedly returned the attentions of no one in particular, many had aspirations that she would do so in time. Some of these blighted sighers contented themselves with tobacco and silence; but others did such wonders at the American Bar that the dejected Hebrew had visions of seeing the former thirst of the Big Stone Holeians reconstituted in all its droughty completeness. But when the Scholar saw the dismay his simple act had spread around him he dissipated it with a kindly laugh and a few reassuring words.

"Don't mind me, boys. I was only doing the civil in a purely platonic manner. Miss Musgrave is nothing to me, nor am I anything to her. Heaven forbid! I'm too hard a bargain for any girl. If any one of you marries her I'll act as his best man if he asks me to, and wish him every felicity without a thought of regret."

"Bully for the Scholar!" yelled the delighted crowd, and Miss Musgrave's smiles were more sought after than ever.

So things went on day after day, week after week, till Miss Musgrave became little short of an autocratic empress. Yet she was so gentle and modest, looked so shocked when an oath slipped out—as it would do occasionally, even with the best-intentioned—that it was as goddess, rather than queen, that they adored her. But

still she showed no signs of taking unto herself a consort; she kept all men at a cousinly distance, and those who felt intimate enough to address her as "Miss Mary" accounted themselves uncommonly fortunate. Thus the little machine of state worked perfectly harmoniously, and Big Stone Hole was as steady and prosperous a settlement as need be.

Had these diggers refreshed their minds by looking back for historical parallels, they might have been prepared in some degree for Miss Musgrave's exit from among them, but as none of them indulged in such retrospections the manner of it took the camp somewhat by surprise.

It was first discovered in this wise. Work was over for the day. The Kaffirs had been searched and had returned to their kraal. Pipes were being lit after the evening meal, and a picturesque assembly was grouping itself in an expectant semi-circle on the sun-baked turf in front of Miss Musgrave's dwelling. She was usually outside to welcome the first comers, and her absence naturally formed the staple topic of conversation. Digger after digger arrived, threw himself down, and joined in the general wonderment as to why Miss Mary wasn't there, and at last some one hazarded the suggestion that "she must be asleep." There was a general epidemic of noisy coughing for a full minute, and then silence for another, but no sound from within the hut.

"Perhaps she's ill," was the next surmise.

After the etiquette to be followed had been strictly discussed, and a rigid course of procedure set down, the Scholar got up and knocked at the door. He received no answer and so knocked again—knocked several times, in fact, and then rattled the handle vigorously, but without result.

"Better open it," said a voice.

And he did so; and, after looking inside, announced: "She's not there."

At this moment Dan came up.

"My ole mar's gone," he said, "an' she ain't stam-

peded, neither, but was stole. Tote-rope's been untied, an' saddle an' bridle took as well."

There was an uncomfortable silence, which the Scholar broke by a low, long-drawn whistle.

"Boys," said he, "let's look inside the safe."

The three men who held the keys brought them up, the bolts were shot, and the massive door swung back. There was every man's little sack with his name on it; but somehow or other the sacks looked limper than of yore. Each one was eagerly clutched and examined, and many a groan, and not a few curses, went up on the still night air as it was found that every sack save Dan's had been relieved of the more valuable part of its contents.

So much heart-breaking labor under the burning sun thrown away for nothing; the dreary work to commence afresh, almost from the beginning! Had the thief been an ordinary one the denunciation would have been unbounded; but no one lifted his tongue very loudly against Mary Musgrave. Yet mounted men were despatched on the three trails to bring back the booty if possible, and the rest moved dejectedly toward their old club. The greasy Jew did not attempt to conceal his exultation. He served his customers with his wicked old face glowing with smiles, and when a moment's breathing-time came he observed:

"We all 'az our leetle surbrizes in dis wairld, an' I most confaiss I am asdonished myzelf to lairn dat Mees Mosgrave is a thief——" Here a crashing among the glassware announced that Tommy Dartmoor had begun shooting with his left hand, and Herr Gustav spluttered out from behind the fingers he held up before his face, "Ach, Gott! I say nozzing more!"

There was no heavy drinking that night, nor, even more strange to relate, was there much noisy discussion. Some of the men were stunned by their loss, and others, who would have waxed garrulous and abusive, were stayed by the warning looks of Tommy Dartmoor and other partisans. No one denied the theft, but all admitted it might have been more thorough. Those

few precious pebbles at the bottom of the sacks and Dan's untouched hoard lingered gratefully in their memories.

The horsemen returned unsuccessful. Mary Musgrave had disappeared without leaving the slightest trace, and work went on as usual. I suppose I shall be expected to say that these diggers went utterly to the bad, but as they did nothing of the sort I shall not perjure myself. True, when their self-made idol disappeared, taking with her many of the valuables from her shrine, they learned that there was more than the usual modicum of clay in her composition; but for all that, the ground which had been shone on by the lustre of her presence had not been lighted in vain. One or two relapsed into their old ruffianly habits, but the majority of the denizens of Big Stone Hole remained in more or less the same moral condition in which Miss Musgrave left them.

When, in after-years, Jockey Bill—who had set up a public-house in England on his savings—saw that redoubtable woman drive past his door in a carriage and pair, and mentioned the fact to the Scholar—who had succeeded to the paternal acres—when he came in for a glass of beer and a chat over old times, the pair of them decided not to hand her over to justice, as she had done them much more good than harm. But, on the other hand, they were firmly agreed not to cultivate her acquaintance farther.

Everybody is familiar with the adage that one must not expect to find an old head on young shoulders; but few have reflected that an equal rarity is a young heart beneath old shoulders. The clever old lady in the charming sketch which follows had such a heart, and, better still, she knew how to breathe something of its spirit into those of others. This idyl of Provence was written by Henry Gréville, and translated from the French for ROMANCE by M. E. B.

HAZEL NUTS.

A LONG green avenue, shaded by interlacing boughs, stretched far, far away until it terminated in a little spot of light, through which you could see the ripening fields, where the sun was turning the wheat to shimmering gold.

A well-pruned hedge of elm trees bordered this grassy avenue, flecked by soft velvety shadows moving here and there according to the fancy of the light breeze that swayed the tree-tops with a sweet rustle of shivering leaves.

Two people, with the slow, mincing steps of old age, were walking down this avenue; she using the handle of her umbrella for a cane, he, still erect and sprightly, walking with his hands behind his back; she, her head covered with a lace scarf, beneath which you could see her silvery curls shining, he, under a broad-brimmed straw hat which made you think of a picture of the sugar planter overseeing his fields of cane in the old editions of "Paul and Virginia."

They were evidently pouting, for they walked without speaking, without looking at each other, save now and then a furtive glance full of reproaches. However, after passing half the length of the avenue, they unconsciously found themselves closer together, and finally condescended to speak.

"You have decided, then," she said, in a sweet voice, in which a little anger still trembled, "to ruin the happiness of these children?"

"On the contrary, I have decided that our little granddaughter shall never reproach me for causing her unhappiness by my imprudence."

She shrugged her shoulders, but very lightly, like the well-bred old lady that she was, and said: "Because the poor boy, who loves her devotedly, has less money than she—a beautiful affair! They are always sure of bread."

"Yes, but no butter," observed grandpa.

"When they love each other, they can eat their bread with kisses," answered grandma, with a half smile.

As he made no reply, she walked on a few steps, looking to the right and to the left, then stopped before a hazel bush, and said:

"Look, my dear, it seems to me I see some hazel nuts!"

With chivalrous politeness grandpa drew near, placed his gold glasses to his eyes, and regarding the bush, said:

"Yes, really, there are some hazel nuts."

"Will you gather me a few, my dear?"

Grandpa looked at grandma with great surprise. It had been many years since either one of them had been able to eat hazel nuts.

Nevertheless, he passed the hook of his cane through one of the branches, and drew it down to grandma, who delicately gathered a bunch of little half-ripe nuts, and fastened it on her corsage with a pin.

"Do you remember?" said she. Just then a ray of sunlight falling through the leaves softly illumined the face of the old grandpa—or was it the tender memory?

The gray eyes of grandma gazed into his with alarming persistency.

He recalled it all very distinctly, but what had hazel nuts to do with an affair so serious as the marriage of their only granddaughter? The good grandpa pretended to be occupied with the branches of a tree which needed the pruner, but grandma took him by his button-hole and continued:

"This is the same bush—you see it is an old one—which was so full of hazel nuts the year that——"

"Yes, yes, I know," said the old man, hoping to escape; but she held him fast.

"It was here in this same place. Do you remember it? I had stripped all the lower branches when you came, and it was you, my dear, who finished gathering them, and as the nuts fell into my apron your eyes became more and more eloquent; the last bunch—do you remember?—you pinned on my bosom, in the same place where I have fastened this one."

"My dear wife!" murmured the old grandpa.

"And you said, 'Darling Madlinette, if your parents refuse to give you to me, I will blow out my brains.'"

"Yes, but we were married, and we have been very happy for forty years," concluded the old man.

"And we were poor—do you remember that?—but we became rich, and the children can do the same."

She said no more, but taking his arm, they walked briskly side by side until they reached the entrance of the avenue, where the white spot had become a great pointed arch of light.

There they talked a long time.

"We must restrict ourselves a little," said the good grandpa, "so as to increase her *dot*."

"That we will do most willingly," said the good grandma.

"And with that, the poor children can have a little butter on their bread."

"Yes; and while they are young," concluded grandma, smilingly, "they can eat hazel nuts."

The effort to appear generous at small cost is a temptation that most people encounter during the trials of the holiday season. The undertaking is always difficult, but rarely as amusing as befell the hero of this tale, which is by Charles Hervey, and is reprinted from *The Argosy*.

A NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

"Only one day more," soliloquized the Baron de Croix-Martel, as he put the finishing stroke to his toilet, and contemplated his well-waxed iron-gray mustache with less satisfaction than he would probably have felt had not his mind been otherwise preoccupied.

"One short December day," he went on after a pause, "and every likely place already explored twice over except the quay. I wonder who the idiot was who first invented New Year's gifts! Not one of *my* ancestors, I'll engage. The Croix-Martels date from the Crusades, and I dare say have been guilty of follies enough since then; but I won't do them the injustice of supposing that they ever threw away more money than they could possibly help."

With this comforting reflection the baron took up his hat, gloves and cane, and sallied forth from his little apartment in the Rue Godot on the errand for which he was bound.

Our hero was a bachelor, not so much from choice as from his inability hitherto to discover what he considered a suitable *parti*. Tall, thin, and just turned fifty, he was sufficiently good-tempered when nothing occurred to put him out of humor, and as notorious a miser as ever existed since the days of Harpagon and John Elwes. Without going so far as some of his particular friends, who affirmed him to be the original of Gavarni's famous type, the gentleman *qui coupait les liards en quatre*, it may safely be said that whenever he could indulge in his favorite weakness without compromising himself, he invariably did so, and adhered strictly to the time-honored maxim of taking care of the pence and letting the pounds take care of themselves.

But, perhaps, of all the disagreeable necessities to which he was periodically compelled to submit, the most obnoxious to his feelings was the obligation of complying with the (to him) utterly inexplicable custom of celebrating the advent of New Year's Day by a distribution of *étrennes;* a drain on his purse which, although he took care to confine his liberality within the narrowest limits, was, even in its modified form, inexpressibly painful to him.

The twenty-franc piece he felt bound to offer his *concièrge* caused him an annual pang, and the guerdon of two francs to the waiter of the little restaurant where he was in the habit of dining when not invited elsewhere lay heavy on his conscience, even after appropriating to his own use—which no one but himself ever dreamed of doing—the cigar tied up with pink ribbon, presented to him as a "reminder," and intended by its owner to be offered in turn to every customer in the room.

These, however, were minor grievances compared with what he was suffering on the last day of the year of grace 1874; and only those who knew him could by any possibility understand or appreciate his mental perplexity on the morning of his introduction to the reader.

In the course of the preceding six months, he had made the acquaintance of the Countess de Franchimont, a Belgian widow lady with two daughters, who had recently settled in Paris, and was, according to report, in possession of a handsome fortune. Naturally partial to society, when it cost him nothing, he had by degrees become an habitual frequenter of her pretty apartments in the Rue de Marignan, and had established himself there to a certain extent as *l'ami de la maison.*

Whether he entertained any ulterior views respecting either mother or daughters we are not in a position to state; if he did, he kept his own counsel, and all that can be hinted on the subject is that he might have done worse.

Mme. de Franchimont was barely forty, and did not look her age; as for Mlle. Berthe, the brune, and

Mlle. Louise, the blonde, they were both charming, and perfectly aware of the fact. In this pleasant circle the baron soon made himself entirely at home. When he did not dine there, and we may be sure that he never refused an invitation unless he had a better one in prospect, he generally dropped in of an evening, or occupied a spare seat in their box at the opera.

This continued intimacy, with its many contingent advantages, he had hitherto enjoyed without scruple; but the time was at hand when, in accordance with Parisian usages, the hospitalities he had received must be adequately returned; New Year's Day was approaching with rapid strides, and his offering on the occasion must, as he dolefully acknowledged, be proportionately liberal.

For days and weeks he had wandered from place to place, like a perturbed spirit, in quest of some object suitable for his purpose; he had dived into obscure passages, and emerged at the other end with the disheartening consciousness of failure, and had pored over the stock of half the curiosity shops in the capital without unearthing a single pearl of price within the limits of his own. Bonbons were, of course, out of the question, even if the tariff of Messrs. Boissier and Gouache permitted such an investment of his money; and as for jewelry, the bare idea made him shudder.

In short, the worthy baron was at his wits' end, and, as a last resource, resolved to explore the refuge of the destitute, the quay, from the Pont Royal to the Pont des Arts, whither we may as well follow him.

He had already exhausted the Quai Voltaire and the Quai Malaquais, and was on the point of retracing his steps, when the recollection of an old bric-à-brac establishment in the adjoining Rue de Seine struck him as a hitherto uninspected locality. Taking, therefore, the turn opposite the Mazarin Library, he speedily discovered on his right hand the object of his search, and entered the shop. A few minutes' examination and a question or two sufficed to convince him that his unlucky star was still in the ascendant, and he was about

to resume his walk when some broken pieces of china lying in a corner caught his eye.

"What is that?" he asked the dealer.

"Ah, monsieur, ne m'en parlez pas!" exclaimed the individual addressed, in a disconsolate tone which seemed to forbid further allusion to the painful subject.

"But what is it?" persisted the baron.

"What it is now, you see, M. le Baron, but what it was before my shopman let it fall and smashed it to bits, you can have no idea. I never saw a finer vase; real old Dresden, worth a couple of thousand francs if it was worth a sou. They say it once belonged to Mme. Dubarry."

"Ah!" said the baron, looking attentively at the heap of fragments, and poking at them with his cane. "Cannot it be repaired?"

"Impossible, monsieur," replied the other. "The cleverest workman in France could make nothing of it now."

"Have you tried?" asked the baron.

"Of what use, monsieur? Who would buy a vase dissected like a map of France?"

"What are you going to do with the pieces?" inquired M. de Croix-Martel, in whose fertile brain a "happy thought" was gradually germinating.

"What can I do but throw them away?" growled the irate tradesman. "They are fit for nothing else. Even a chiffonnier would hardly pick them up."

"Will you sell them to me for five francs?"

The dealer's eye glistened.

"Certainly, monsieur, if you desire it. But what possible use——"

"Never mind," interrupted the baron, "that's my affair. Now listen; what I want you to do is this. You will pack up these pieces, just as they are, mind, put this card of mine with them, and send the parcel this evening from nine to half past to Mme. la Comtesse de Franchimont, 64 Rue de Marignan. It is not to be taken upstairs, but left with the concièrge. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, M. le Baron," answered the owner of the bric-à-brac shop, glancing at the card as he spoke; "all shall be done exactly as you wish."

"I can quite depend upon you?"

"Quite, M. le Baron. At nine-thirty to the moment it shall be delivered."

"Enfin!" said M. de Croix-Martel to himself, as he walked briskly homeward. "A most brilliant inspiration, ma parole! For five francs I shall have the credit of a present worthy of a millionaire. The fellow who brings it will naturally be supposed to have let it drop on the way—the Champs Elysées are always slippery in frosty weather—and to have bolted in order to avoid unpleasant inquiries. When the parcel arrives, I shall be there, and as no one knows where I bought it, I can storm away at my ease without fear of discovery. Glorious piece of luck! I've a good mind to treat myself to half a bottle of Beauné at dinner on the strength of it. And so I will, parbleu!"

And so he did.

. . . . . .

Punctually at five minutes before nine, fortified by the generous stimulant alluded to, and in the highest possible spirits, the baron rang the first-floor bell at No. 64 Rue de Marignan, and was immediately ushered into the drawing-room, where the three ladies were assembled. Mme. de Franchimont, seated by the fire, was occupied with some intricate marvel of embroidery, while her daughters were busily employed in arranging on a table in the centre of the apartment a variety of bonbon boxes and other objects strongly indicative of New Year's Day, which had evidently just arrived.

"Look here, M. le Baron," said Berthe, as he entered the room; "see what a number of presents we have already received; a lapis-lazuli paper-cutter, and such a beautiful flower-stand near the window!"

"And a delicious filigree card-case," chimed in Louise, holding up the object in question for the inspection of the visitor.

"Charming, indeed," responded M. de Croix-Martel,

looking more admiringly at the speaker than at the card-case.

"There, that will do, girls," interposed her mother, after shaking hands with her guest. "Come and sit by the fire, baron, and Berthe will give you some tea."

"I trust," he replied, "that when *my* humble offering arrives, you will be—ahem!—equally indulgent."

"No follies, I hope, baron," said Mme. de Franchimont, shaking her head reprovingly.

"Oh, madame, a mere trifle, I assure you," answered our hero, in a deprecating tone, accompanied, however, by a significant twirl of his mustache. "But you will see—you will see."

At that moment the door opened, and the *maître d'hôtel* appeared, bearing a voluminous parcel, which he solemnly placed on the table, and with the explanatory announcement, "Pour Mme. la Comtesse," withdrew as noiselessly as he had entered.

"I wonder what it is," cried Berthe. "Give me your scissors, Louise."

"Who can it be from?" said her sister.

"What a strangely shaped parcel!" remarked Mme. de Franchimont, rising from her chair and approaching the table; while the baron, laying down his cup, was preparing himself for an outburst of indignation, or, in other words, was "getting the steam up."

"Ah, here is a card," exclaimed Mlle. Berthe, as she hastily tore away the last obstacle to the gratification of her curiosity. "M. le Baron! I knew it could be no one else. Mon Dieu! what can this be?"

M. de Croix-Martel, who had quietly drawn near the table, gave one look at the contents of the packet, stood for a moment horror-struck, and then, unperceived by the three ladies, slipped out of the room and darted down the Rue de Marignan as fast as his legs could carry him. He had seen enough.

Alas! for the vanity of human calculations. The dealer of the Rue de Seine had exceeded his instructions, and had carefully enveloped every fragment of the shattered vase in a separate piece of paper,

The attempt to disprove the assertion that there is nothing new under the sun is the motive of this story by François Coppée. The effort, as might have been expected, proved futile, but the human contemporaneousness of the story makes it well worth reading. It has been rendered into English for ROMANCE by Wm. F. M. Rogers.

A PLOT FOR A PLAY.

THE men were talking in the smoking-room after dinner. The Jew, Pereira, the theatrical manager, so well known by his marbled shirt collars and his triumphant neckties, stood before the fireplace, holding in his hand a small glass of curaçoa.

"The anecdote," said he, "the anecdote—everything depends on that. A play is good only if one can recount the plot in five minutes. When an author comes to talk to me of a comedy at my breakfast hour, I stop him immediately. Can you tell me your business before I finish this soft-boiled egg? If he cannot, the play is of no value."

And Pereira swallowed his glass of curaçoa.

"I am not a dramatic author," said the tall Maurice, the *attaché* of embassy, from the depths of the large arm-chair, where he was half hid; "but still, if you wish it, Pereira, I will tell an anecdote, from which, it seems to me, a man in that trade could get an idea But the time it takes to eat an egg is very short."

"Well, I grant you an omelet," said the Jew with a loud laugh. "But the ideas for plots of people of the world—'I mistrust it,' as said the man who was about to be guillotined. But go ahead."

"Very well! The story made the rounds of the drawing-rooms at Vienna when I was there. There was then in Vienna a physician renowned for his success with heart disease. He was named—I change the name, naturally, for the thing was tragic—he was named Dr. Arnold. Scarcely forty years old, he had already a magnificent practice. He was a handsome man; very elegant, with regular features, large blond whiskers in the Austrian style, but a pair of eyes like

an American, blue and cold as steel, which flashed in the light. A Russian family which resided in Vienna —let us name them, if you will, the Skebeloffs—called the doctor in consultation on the case of the daughter of the house, in whom the specialist recognized after the first examination the commencement of aneurism. It must have been a delicate thing to auscultate Miss Macha. Just think of it! To apply his ear to the chest of a beautiful brunette of nineteen years, and knock upon her heart, as if to say: 'Can I come in?'"

"Maurice," interrupted the master of the house, "no vaudeville pleasantry. You promised us a drama."

"You will have it, rest assured. Although they were received in good society, these Skebeloffs were a little suspected. They lived at the hotel. The father Skebeloff had too many cords, knots and frogs on his furred cloak. They had quite a number of servants, and the mother's diamonds passed for false. With all this, two daughters to place, too beautiful to be of any use; in fact, doubtful characters. But the doctor fell in love; he demanded Miss Macha in marriage; was allowed to make his court, was married at the end of three months, and the Skebeloff family, suddenly disgusted with Vienna, flitted away to new *tables d'hôte*. The doctor's wife, *frau doctorin*, as they say there, was well received in Vienna society. The newly-married couple were very interesting; the doctor loved Macha both as his wife and as his patient. He adored her and he nursed her. This little romance enchanted the sentimental. Already Mrs. Arnold, whose health was to all appearances re-established, showed herself often to the world, and even waltzed there sometimes——"

"Notwithstanding her disease of the heart?"

"Yes. The young wife seemed so entirely cured that her husband permitted a turn of waltz, as a physician; but I believe he would willingly have forbidden it as a jealous husband. For the handsome Captain de Blazewitz—an Apollo in a white uniform—was always the first to write his name on Mrs. Arnold's ball programme, and pressed her tenderly against his aiglets.

Once more the old fable of Mars and Venus was revived."

"Good," said Pereira. "It is clear enough that your good-natured people posed."

"Perhaps! One day the doctor discovered a package of letters——"

"That's old—the package of letters!"

"Pereira, you are insupportable! You may sneer, if you wish, but in my anecdote there are some letters."

"Which furnish to the husband the certainty of his dishonor—is that not so?"

"Certainly."

"And which make him conceive the project of vengeance!"

"Do you know the story, Pereira? If so, tell it."

"No, my friend, but I *cut down*, to use a term of our trade. I cut down, that is all. Then the husband avenged himself——"

"By one of those crimes which always remain undiscovered——"

"Then how do you know it?"

"Because the doctor talked. Yes, the guilty one himself, yielding to that irresistible, that fatal need of imparting secrets which exists in all men, and which makes of the Catholic confessional one of the most——"

"Keep to your story, Maurice; keep to your story."

"I won't say another word," grumbled the vexed young man.

"Don't be angry," said the grossly insolent Pereira. "We saved you the trouble of finishing your sentence. It is the true theatrical style. See Scribe and Sardou. All in dialogue, with points of suspension. I am sick of repeating it to the young authors. No style! No knowledge of literature! There have been plays that have failed on account of an adjective. No one knows what harm a metaphor may do. So with romances——"

"In your turn, Pereira," said the master of the house, looking at the Jew with a jeering air through his monocle. "When will you be through?"

"It is just. Maurice, you said then that the husband——"

"Imagined a terrible vengeance, but one permissible only to one of his profession. Macha was not completely cured—he knew it well, the specialist—of this heart disease for which he had treated her during two years with so much zeal and love. He undertook to replace her in her old state. Curbing his wrath, he compelled himself to maintain toward his wife the air of a dissatisfied, suspicious husband, and so gave birth to fear and anguish in the guilty wife's soul. He knew by the letters he had intercepted what a guilty passion possessed the two lovers; he was sure they always sought to see each other, even in the midst of dangers. This domestic Machiavel profited by this situation. After that, a mysterious power put all sorts of small obstacles between Macha and M. de Blazewitz, without, however, separating them entirely. It made their rendezvous to fail, interrupted their correspondence, troubled and poisoned their loves, and in this life of lively and sorrowful emotions, Mrs. Arnold's health again changed profoundly. The doctor killed his wife with as much certainty and precision as he had but now cured her. To an hour of wild terror, which gave morbid activity to the circulation, the clever man caused to succeed long days of sadness, which congested the heart, and retained the blood there. Then suddenly he feigned to have no more jealousy and appeared touched even to tears at his wife's sufferings. 'What is the matter, my poor Macha?' said he to her. 'I cannot diagnose your case. You have the appearance of a person dying of grief. Are you not happy with me?' And while watching with a truly diabolical delight the progress of the malady, he crucified his victim with his false-faced despair. At the end of six months the syncopes were more frequent, the palpitations more rapid, the most disquieting symptoms of aneurism had reappeared. Ah, ha! Pereira, you do not interrupt me now!"

"Oh! yes, yes! This is the second act—the connect-

ing part of the play. But the *dénouement*, the *dénouement?*"

"The *dénouement!*" cried Maurice, with the accent of a restaurant waiter who serves you with a dish. "Here it is. One evening the doctor burst into his wife's room like a tempest. 'Madam, I know all. M. de Blazewitz is your lover.' The poor Macha became as pale as a sheet, and the violet color of death appeared on her lips. 'Kill me!' she said. This was just what he wished.

"'I would not lay hand on a woman,' was Arnold's reply. 'Your accomplice has paid for both. I have just fought with M. de Blazewitz. I have killed him!' and Macha fell rigid upon the floor. But the doctor lied; he did not dare to touch the mustache of the handsome captain, who passed for the best shot in Vienna. He kneeled beside his wife, extended upon the floor, and took her hand in his. The pulses still beat. She yet lived. Then the brute gave her some attention—revived her. 'Go, put on a ball dress and all your diamonds,' he commanded, 'and accompany me to the French Embassy ball, to which we are invited.' 'No, no! I could never do it!' 'Go dress yourself, and we will start. I have taken as a pretext for my duel with M. de Blazewitz a quarrel over the cards. But you are compromised. It is necessary that you should be seen this evening on my arm in society. If not, it would be thought that I fought on your account, and I should be dishonored. Get dressed. I wish it!' The unhappy one had to obey. How could she resist the man she had so cruelly outraged? She made her toilet. What agony! And her husband dragged her to the Embassy ball. There, overcome, she sought a retired spot, rather than seat herself in the first drawing-room, where the usher every minute or so announced the names of the arrivals. The doctor, in full dress, superb, with all his decorations, stood up behind his wife's chair. All at once, after glancing into the antechamber, he leaned over to Macha's ear, as if to whisper a gallantry. 'Grief has not killed you, then, *miserable?*'

'Not yet, unhappily,' murmured this criminal who expiated her offence. 'Very well. Look, then,' added he, pointing to the door, 'and die of joy!' At that moment the usher announced in a sonorous voice, 'Captain Baron de Blazewitz!' The handsome officer entered, a smile on his lips, and immediately, as he always did, sought his mistress with a look. He scarcely recognized her. She had just risen from her chair, and stood erect, as if impelled by a steel spring, livid under her diamond tiara, frightful to behold. She cast on him a wild look, pressed her hand on her throat, and fell heavily on the floor, dead—quite dead, this time! There was a terrible scene. The doctor threw himself on his wife's body with a cry, and M. de Blazewitz's despair would have caused a scandal, if a friend had not drawn him away! All the guests fled; the lackeys ate the supper, and the ambassadress was much put out, for she had had made expressly for the cotillion some grotesque heads, with which she expected to make a great hit."

Maurice stopped; there was a moment of silence. The auditors nearly shivered, and Pereira himself had the tact not to utter any nonsense.

But the mistress of the house appeared, raising the tapestry portières of the smoking-room.

"Sirs, have you finished your cigars? The ladies await you."

While passing to the drawing-room, Pereira took Maurice's arm.

"And the doctor?—what became of him?"

"As I told you, he nearly, in an imprudent moment, boasted of his crime, which, however, escaped all punishment. But his sojourn at Vienna became difficult. To-day he is at Varsovie, where he has a good practice and where he continues to repeat to those inflicted with the disease of which he has made a specialty—'Above all, no emotions; no emotions!' But what do you think of my plot for a play?"

"Impossible, my dear fellow. All the critics would say that it was an imitation of Octave Feuillet's 'Julie.'"

That women are natural smugglers is a belief current in the custom-houses of all nations, yet the most prejudiced persons would scarcely assert that the extent to which this young lady carried the art is the legitimate outcome of trimming sealskin sacks with lace or creating bustles of value. It is republished by permission from the Detroit *Evening News*.

A FAIR SMUGGLER.

TAMAN is the most wretched of all our maritime towns. I almost died of hunger there, besides being nearly drowned.

I arrived very late at night in a wretched telega. The coachman stopped his tired horses close to a stone building, which stands by itself at the entrance to the town. A Black Sea Cossack, who was on guard, heard the bells of my carriage and cried out, with the sharp accent of a person suddenly waked up, "Who goes there?"

Out came the sergeant and corporal. I told them I was an officer, travelling by order of the crown, and that I wanted a billet somewhere.

The corporal took us into town. All the houses we tried were already occupied. The weather was cold; I had been three nights without sleep. I was very tired and our useless inquiries ended by irritating me.

"My friend," I said to the corporal, "take me to some place where I can at least lie down, no matter where it is."

"I know a hut in the neighborhood," replied the corporal, "where you might sleep; but I am afraid it would scarcely suit your honor."

"Go on," I said, paying no attention to his observation.

After much walking through dirty little streets we at last reached a sort of cabin on the edge of the sea.

The full moon cast its light on the thatched roof and the white walls of my proposed habitation. In the court surrounded by a sort of palisade I saw a hut, older

and more broken down than the principal one. From this hut the ground sloped rapidly through the court down toward the sea, and I saw at my feet the foam of the troubled waters. "This will do," I said to myself. "To-morrow morning I shall start for Ghelendchik."

A Cossack of the line was acting as my servant. I told him to take out my trunk and send away the postilion, after which I called the master of the house. I could get no answer. I knocked, but there was still no reply. What could it mean? I knocked again, and at last a boy of about fourteen showed himself.

"Where's the master of the house?"

"There is none," returned the child, in the dialect of Little Russia.

"No master! Then where is the mistress?"

"Gone into the village."

"Who will open the door, then?" I cried, at the same time kicking at it.

The door opened itself and out came a wave of damp steam.

I struck a match and saw by its light a blind boy standing motionless before me.

I must here say that I am strongly prejudiced against the blind, the deaf, the lame, the hunchbacked; in short, against the deformed in general. I have remarked that there is always a singular correspondence between the physical formation of a man and his moral nature, as though by the loss of a member the individual lost certain faculties of the soul.

I examined the child's face; but what can one make of a physiognomy without eyes? I looked at him for some time with a feeling of compassion, when suddenly I saw on his lips a cunning smile, which produced upon me a very disagreeable impression. "Could this blind boy be not so blind as he appeared?" I said to myself. Answering my own question I said that the boy was evidently suffering from cataract, and that the appearance of cataract cannot be simulated. Why, moreover, should he affect blindness? Yet in spite of my argument I still remained vaguely suspicious.

"Is the mistress of the cabin your mother?" I said to the boy.

"No."

"Who are you, then?"

"A poor orphan," he replied.

"Has the mistress any children?"

"She has one daughter, who has gone to sea with a Tartar."

"What Tartar?"

"How do I know? A Tartar of the Crimea, a boatman from Kertch."

I went into the hut. Two benches, a table, and a large wardrobe placed near the stove composed the whole of the furniture. No holy image against the wall—bad sign!

My Cossack took possession of one of the benches. Ten minutes afterward he was fast asleep. I, however, was still awake, and could not drive from my mind the impression made upon me by the boy, with his two white eyes.

An hour passed. Through the window fell upon the floor the fantastic light of the moon.

Suddenly a shadow was cast, where before there had been a bright light. I sprang up and went to the window. A human figure passed once more, and then disappeared — heaven knows where. I could scarcely believe that it had escaped by the slope into the sea, yet there was no other issue.

Throwing on my overcoat and taking my sabre I went out of the cabin and saw the blind boy before me. I concealed myself behind the wall, and he passed on confidently, but with a certain cautiousness. He was carrying something under his arm, and advanced slowly down the slope toward the sea. "This is the hour," I said to myself, "in which speech is restored to the dumb and sight to the blind."

He was now so near to the sea that with another step he would be lost. But this was not the first of his nocturnal expeditions; so at least I concluded from the agility with which he now sprang from rock to rock,

while the sea poured in beneath his feet. Suddenly he stopped as though he had heard some noise, sat down upon a rock and placed his burden by his side. He was now joined by a white figure walking along the shore. I had concealed myself behind one of the rocks, and overheard the following conversation:

"The wind," said a woman's voice, "is very violent; Janko will not come."

"Janko," replied the blind boy, "Janko is not afraid of the wind."

"But the clouds get thicker and thicker."

"In the darkness it is easier to escape the coast guard."

"And what if he gets drowned?"

"You will have no more bright ribbons to wear on Sunday."

As I listened to the colloquy, I remarked that the blind boy who had spoken to me in the Little Russian dialect, talked quite correctly the true Russian language.

"You see," he continued, clapping his hands, "I was right. Janko fears neither the sea, nor the wind, nor the fog, nor the coast guard. Listen! It is not the breaking of the waves I hear. No, it is the noise of his oars."

The woman got up, and with an anxious look tried to pierce the darkness. "You are wrong," she said, "I hear nothing."

I also tried to see whether there was some sort of craft in the distance, but could distinguish nothing. A moment later, however, a black speck showed itself among the waves, now rising, now falling. At last I could make out the form of a boat dancing on the waters, and rapidly approaching the shore.

The man who was guiding it must have been a bold sailor to cross on such a night an arm of the sea some fourteen miles across, and must have had good reasons for braving so much danger. I watched the frail little craft which was now diving and plunging like a duck through the breakers. It seemed as though she must the next moment be dashed to pieces on the shore, when suddenly the skilful rower turned into a little

bay, and there, in comparatively calm water, effected a landing.

The man was of middle height, and wore on his head a cap of black sheepskin.

He made a sign with his hand, when the two mysterious persons who had been talking joined him. Then the three united their forces to drag from the boat a burden which seemed to be so heavy that I cannot even now understand how so light a craft could have supported such a weight. They at last hoisted the cargo on their shoulders, then walked away and soon disappeared.

The best thing for me to do now was to return to my resting-place. But the strange scene I had witnessed had so struck me that I waited impatiently for daybreak.

My Cossack was much surprised when, on waking up, he found me fully dressed. I said nothing to him about my nocturnal excursion, but remained for some little time looking through the window with admiration at the blue sky, studded with little clouds, and the distant shore, the Crimea, stretched along the horizon like a streak of violet, ending in a rock, above which could be seen the tower of a light-house. Then I went out and walked to the fort of Chanaogra to ask the commandant when I could go to Ghelendchik.

Unfortunately the commandant could give me no positive answer; the only vessels in port were stationary ones, and trading ships which had not yet taken in their cargo. "Perhaps," he said, "in three or four days a mail packet will come in, and then something can be arranged."

I went back in a very bad humor to my lodging. At the door stood the Cossack, who, coming toward me with rather a scared look, said inquiringly:

"Bad news?"

"Yes," I answered. "Heaven knows when we shall get away from here."

At these words the anxiety of the soldier seemed to increase. He came close to me and murmured in a low voice:

"This is not a place to stop at. I met just now a Black Sea Cossack of my acquaintance—we were serving in the same detachment last year. When I told him where we had put up: 'Bad place,' he said; 'bad people.' And what do you think of that blind boy? Did any one ever before see a blind person running about from one place to another; going to the bazar, bringing in bread and water? Here they seem to think nothing of it."

"Has the mistress of the place come in?"

"This morning, while you were out, an old woman came with her daughter."

"What daughter? Her daughter is away."

"I don't know who it is, then. But look, there is the old woman sitting down in the cabin."

I went in. A good fire was shining in the stove, and a breakfast was being prepared, which, for such poor people, seemed to me rather a luxurious one. When I spoke to the old woman she told me that she was stone deaf.

It was impossible, then, to talk to her. I turned to her blind boy, and taking him by the ear, said:

"I say, you litle wizard, where were you going last night with that parcel under your arm?"

He at once began to moan and cry, and then sobbed out:

"Where was I going last night? I went nowhere. And with a parcel! What parcel?"

The old woman now proved that her ears, when she so desired, were by no means closed.

"It is not true," she cried. "Why do you tease an unfortunate boy? What do you take him for? What harm has he done you?"

I could stand the noise no longer. So I went out, determined somehow or other to find the solution of this riddle.

About an hour passed, perhaps more. Suddenly the cadences of a singing voice struck my ear. I listened and heard a strange melody, now slow and sad, now rapid and lively. The sounds seemed to fall from the

sky. I looked up, and on the roof of the cabin I saw a young girl in a straight dress, with dishevelled hair, like a naiad.

I looked again toward the singer, but she had disappeared. A moment after she passed rapidly before me, singing another song and snapping her fingers. She went to the old woman and said something to her. The old woman seemed annoyed. The young girl burst into a laugh. Then, with a bound, she came close to me, suddenly stopped and looked at me fixedly, as though surprised to see me. Then, turning away with an air of indifference, she walked quietly toward the shore.

All the rest of the day I saw her at short intervals, always singing and dancing.

I had never seen such a woman before. She could scarcely be called beautiful, but I have my own ideas on the subject of beauty. There was a thoroughbred look about her, and with women, as with horses, there is nothing like breed.

What charmed me in her was the extraordinary suppleness of her figure, the singular movements of her head and her long, fair hair hanging down in waves of gold on her neck, and her nose, which was perfectly formed, and in her sidelong glance there was something dark and wild.

Toward the evening I stopped my Undine at the door of the hut and said to her:

"Tell me, my pretty one, what were you doing today on the roof?"

"I was seeing in what direction the wind blew."

"How did that concern you?"

"Whence blows the wind, thence comes happiness."

"And your singing was to bring you good fortune?"

"Where singing is heard there is joy."

"But what should you say if your singing caused unhappiness?"

"If unhappiness arrives it must be borne. And from grief to joy the distance is not great."

"Who taught you those songs?"

"No one; I dream and I sing; those who understand me listen to me, and those who do not listen to me cannot understand me."

"What is your name?"

"Ask those who baptized me."

"And who baptized you?"

"I do not know."

"Ah! you are very mysterious, but I know something about you."

There was no sign of emotion on her face; her lips did not move.

"Last night," I continued, "you were on the seashore." Then I told her the scene I had witnessed. I thought this would have caused her to evince some symptom of anxiety, but it had no such effect.

"You assisted at a curious interview," she said to me with a laugh; "but you do not know much, and what you do know you had better keep under lock and key, as you would keep some precious treasure."

"But if," I continued with a grave and almost menacing air, "I were to relate what I saw to the commandant?"

At these words she darted away, singing, and disappeared like a frightened bird.

The night came. I told my Cossack to prepare the tea urn, lighted a wax candle, and sat down at the table, smoking my long pipe. I was drinking my tea, when the door opened and I heard the rustling of a dress. I rose hastily and recognized my siren.

She sat down silently beside me and fixed me with a look which made me tremble; one of those magical looks which had troubled my life in earlier days. Her countenance was pale as death. In its paleness I thought I could see the agitation of her heart. Her fingers struck mechanically on the table; her body seemed to shudder; her bosom rose violently and the moment afterward seemed depressed.

This species of comedy tired me at last, and I was about to bring it to an end in the most prosaic manner by offering my fair visitor a cup of tea, when suddenly

she rose and taking my head in her hands gazed at me with all the appearance of passionate tenderness.

A cloud covered my eyes, and I wished in my turn to kiss her, but she escaped, like a snake, murmuring as she did so, "To-night, when everything is quiet, meet me on the shore." Then she disappeared, upsetting as she did so my tea urn and my solitary light.

"She is the very mischief!" cried my Cossack, who had been looking out for his share of the tea.

He then lay down on the bench, and gradually my agitation subsided.

"Listen," I said to him. "If you hear a pistol-shot, hurry down as fast as you can to the shore."

He rubbed his eyes, and replied mechanically, "Yes, sir."

I placed my pistol in my belt and went out. The siren was waiting for me at the top of the path leading down to the sea, lightly clad in a stuff which clung to her waist like a scarf.

"Follow me," she said, taking me by the hand.

We walked down the rocky path in such a manner that I cannot understand how I failed to break my neck. Then we turned sharply to the right, as the blind boy had done the night before. The moon was not yet up. Two little stars, like the fires of light-houses, relieved the darkness. The agitated waves lifted and let fall in regular cadence a solitary boat close to the shore.

"Get in," she said. I hesitated, for I confess that I have not the least taste for sentimental excursions on the sea. But it was impossible to refuse. She leaped into the bark, I followed her, and off we went.

"What does all this mean?" I said, getting angry.

"It means," she replied, making me sit down on a bench and putting her arms around my waist, "it means that I love you." Her burning cheek was close to mine and I felt her hot breath in my face. Suddenly I heard something fall into the water. Instinctively my hand went to my belt. The pistol was no longer there.

A horrible suspicion seized me. The blood rushed to my brain. I looked at her. We were far from shore

and I could not swim. I tried to escape from her embrace, but she held to me like a cat, and almost succeeded by a sudden jerk in throwing me out of the boat, which was already on one side. I contrived, however, to restore the equilibrium, and then began between my perfidious companion and myself a desperate struggle, in which I employed all my strength, while feeling that the abominable creature was overcoming me by her agility.

"What do you mean?" I said to her, squeezing her little hands so tightly that I heard her fingers crack; but whatever pain I may have caused her, she did not utter a word. Her reptile nature could not thus be overcome.

"You saw us," she cried at last. "You want to denounce us." Then by a rapid and violent effort she threw me down. Her body and mine were now bending over the side of the frail craft and her hair was in the water. The moment was a critical one. I got up on my knees, took her with one hand by the hair, with the other by the throat, and when I at last compelled her to unclutch my clothes, I threw her into the sea.

Twice her head reappeared among the foaming waves. Then I saw her no more.

In the bottom of the boat I found an old oar, with which, after much labor, I succeeded in getting to the shore. As I walked back to the hut by the path leading to the sea, I looked toward the place where the night before the blind boy had been awaiting the arrival of the sailor. The moon at this moment was shining in the sky, and I fancied I could discern on the seashore a white figure. Filled with curiosity, I concealed myself behind a sort of promontory, from which I could remark what was going on around me. What was my surprise, and I almost say my joy, when I saw that the white figure was my naiad? She was wringing the water out of her long, fair locks and her wet dress clung to her body. A boat, which I could just see in the distance, was coming toward us. Out of it sprang the same boatman whom I had seen the night before, with

the same Tartar cap. I now saw that his hair was cut in the Cossack fashion, and that from his girdle hung a large knife.

"Janko," cried the young girl, "all is lost."

Then they began to talk, but in so low a voice that I could not hear them.

"Where is the blind boy?" said Janko at last, raising his voice.

"He will be here soon," was the answer.

At that very moment the blind boy appeared, carrying on his back a packet, which he placed in the bark.

"Listen," said Janko; "keep a good watch here; the things you know are valuable. Tell"—here a name was uttered which I could not catch—"that I am no longer in his service. Things have taken a bad turn. He will see me no more. The situation is so dangerous that I must get something to do elsewhere. He will not find such another very easily. You may add that if he had rewarded more liberally the dangerous services rendered to him, Janko would not have left him in the lurch. If he wants to know where to find me—where the wind howls, where the sea foams, that is where I am at home."

After a moment's silence Janko went on: "Say she accompanies me. She cannot remain here. Tell the old woman that she has done her time, and that she ought to be satisfied. We shall not see her again."

"And I?" murmured the blind boy.

"I cannot be troubled about you."

The young girl leaped into the boat, and with her hand made a sign to her companion.

"Here," he said to the blind boy, "that will do to buy a gingerbread."

"Nothing more?" replied the child.

"Yes, take this," and a piece of money fell upon the sands.

The blind boy did not pick it up.

Janko took his place in the boat. The blind boy remained sitting down on the seashore, and he seemed to be crying. Poor fellow! his grief afflicted me. Why had

fate thrown me in the midst of this peaceful circle of smugglers? As a stone troubles the water, I had brought disorder into these lives, and, like the stone, moreover, I had very nearly sunk.

When I got back to the cabin my Cossack was so fast asleep that it would have been cruel to disturb him. I lighted the candle and saw that my litle box containing my valuables, my sabre with silver mountings, my Circassian dagger (given to me by a friend) had all been carried off. Now I understood what the packet placed in the boat by the blind boy must have contained.

I woke up my Cossack with a blow, reproached him for his negligence and fairly lost my temper. But my anger could not make me find what I had lost.

And how could I complain to the authorities? Should I not have been laughed at if I had told them that I had been robbed by a blind boy, and almost drowned by a young girl?

After a brief but circuitous route the hero of this tale arrives at the conclusion of Candide, that after all it is better to dig in one's garden. It is taken from the Spanish of Maria del Pilar Sinnés, and has been rendered into English for ROMANCE by E. J. Fagundus.

THE STOLEN DIAMOND.

In Trouville, near Havre, about the end of August three people were assembled in a pleasant room overlooking a beautiful garden. They seemed to be discussing a subject of importance; they were a young man of about twenty-five, a girl of twenty, and the father of the latter, a man of about fifty.

"Why do we need riches?" asked Theodore, the young man. "Can they by chance maintain our happiness? Anna and I would live very happily in a cottage, and the bread earned by my labor would be for us both sweet as ambrosia." Anna replied with a tender glance, which seemed very eloquent to Theodore, because it openly repeated that which the girl's heart had secretly told him many times. The father, who had a kind face, turned his head aside to hide a smile, then he exclaimed:

"My children, I might tell you many things which you would only use to repeat in your turn in vain to your children twenty years from now; till then you would neither believe them nor understand them; but as I love my daughter more than my life, and esteem him who desires to be her husband enough to confide her happiness to his care, I cannot consent to your union till Theodore returns from the voyage that he is obliged to make under his employer's orders."

Theodore spoke slightingly of the profit which he would derive from this voyage, whose sole motive was commercial reasons; but Anna's father was inflexible, and the lovers were obliged to yield to what they considered an old man's whim.

"Good-by, Theodore," said Anna; "I shall pray Heaven, not that you return rich, but constant."

Theodore assured Anna with a loving glance that her wish would be granted, and a few days later he embarked.

II.

During the long voyage Theodore thought of the places which he was to visit, which were entirely new to him. The splendors of the Orient evoked by his imagination offered marvellous pictures; and little by little he formed an idea of the extraordinary luxury of the East.

But when they arrived in Constantinople his disenchantment was intense. In disgust at the difference between the reality and the descriptions, he resolved to think only of his beloved; and as the merchant whom he accompanied was to share the profits with him, he calculated about what he should receive and exclaimed: "Anna's father will be satisfied. I am now certain that nothing will interfere with our happiness!"

One evening, seated in his modest room with his elbows on the table and his head in his hands, he amused himself by arranging the expenses of his future home, discussed the grave question of servants, formed an interminable list of furniture which he considered necessary to adorn his house, and, not content with all this, even thought of how his beloved would look at the wedding, when suddenly two knocks at the door interrupted his agreeable task. He opened the door, and was not a little surprised at the entrance of a man who, after glancing around the room, turned and locked the door. Before Theodore could speak the unknown said:

"Sir, we have only ten minutes to make a bargain on which depends your fortune and my life."

"I do not understand you."

"Listen," replied his mysterious interlocutor. "I am a slave employed in the mines. I have stolen a diamond and, feigning illness, have succeeded in being sent here. No prince in the world possesses a stone so precious as

this; but my diamond is a treasure useless to me, because I am in need of money and without resources I cannot escape to sell it. So, you understand, I cannot hope for any benefit from it; and if you will give me enough to escape, the stone is yours."

"But——" stammered Theodore.

"Look at it and accept my proposition; it will make you rich and me happy, because it will assist me to return to the bosom of my family."

And the slave showed an enormous diamond to Theodore, who contemplated it with intense astonishment.

"Certainly," he said, "it is a magnificent stone. I have seen many of its class, but none so perfect nor so large. Any ruler would be proud to adorn his crown with it."

"Do not lose time; by depriving yourself of a few pounds you will be a millionaire and I will be happy."

"And if they pursue me?" observed Theodore.

"Pursue you! Who would suspect you? And then you can escape."

Theodore was in doubt, but as the slave was going, he took the diamond, and gave for it what money he had; then, taking part of his portion from his employer, he also fled.

III.

Theodore provided himself with a good guide and travelled by the most rugged paths, the more easily to escape any pursuit.

However, one day they met a band of thieving Arabs.

"Have you money with you?" they asked.

"We have only enough for the journey," Theodore answered.

"Then do not offer any resistance; after searching you, we will leave you enough to finish your journey."

"That won't do," replied Theodore, and raising his pistol, he discharged it at the first Arab, who fell.

Other thieves came to the aid of their companions, and, after a fierce struggle, killed the guide and took Theodore prisoner; and, notwithstanding the fierce re-

sistance which he made, they took possession of the diamond.

His great grief at losing it made the Arabs think that it was an amulet, and one of their women gave the stone to her child as a plaything.

After a time the Arab chief, becoming fond of the prisoner, told him that when his wounds were healed, he would be free to leave them with all that they had taken from him.

So Theodore recovered with his health his diamond and his liberty.

Not knowing which way to go, he concealed himself in a cave, where he remained two days, when a caravan appeared, which he joined, and was thus able to continue his journey.

Always worried and suspicious, he took the poorest accommodations in the inns, and the cheapest food, so that no one might suppose he possessed a treasure. Near the end of his journey he wrote to Anna's father, and began his letter with this phrase:

"I am rich! immensely rich!"

This displeased Anna, who thought that Theodore should have written of more important things first; but she silenced her misgivings, concluding that his conduct was only another proof of his love for her.

However, the thought of the immense fortune of her lover robbed her of her natural light-heartedness; her father also was very reserved—not to appear covetous; and Theodore, considering that he would be conferring a favor by marrying Anna, gave himself the airs of a protector.

As they thus mutually were deceived, their first interview was cold and unsatisfactory to both.

A few days later Anna said to Theodore:

"I do not know why, but your fortune frightens me; it destroys all our plans."

"What does that matter?" Theodore answered. "Thanks to my riches, we can now go to Paris and live in one of the finest palaces."

"Oh! I should have preferred our dear little house—

our trees and our dreamed-of happiness, to all the palaces and riches in the world!"

IV.

Theodore went to Paris to see the royal jeweller; but the latter was absent and would not return for eight or ten days. So he employed the time in looking for a splendid house and furniture, and ornaments to correspond. He also ordered a carriage and a pair of magnificent horses. He soon found that he had a multitude of relations, who, till now, had not troubled themselves about him.

When he entered a drawing-room his name caused a sensation, and people talked of the immense fortune he had made in the East.

He was well received everywhere. Mothers tried to attract him for their daughters, and the daughters decided that he was very eligible.

Poor Anna was running grave risks of being forgotten. However, shortly afterward the two lovers, now husband and wife, were living in the same little house of which Anna had so often dreamed.

V.

When the court jeweller had examined Theodore's diamond, he said:

"Truly, it is admirable! However, I do not wish to possess it, for I do not deal in false stones. This is a splendid imitation, and it will not be difficult for you to sell it. Any jeweller will give you ten francs for it."

With those ten francs Theodore was able to regain Havre on foot. There he fortunately found a position, with a salary of twenty-five hundred francs a year, and shortly afterward he and Anna were married.

It is said that we elbow heroes every day. The only trouble is that, like Archimedes with his lever, opportunities do not arise to develop and display this vast over-supply of heroism. Jim Marlow in the following story, which was written for ROMANCE by Henry Lothrop Smith, found his opportunity and rose to it.

ASA FLEETWOOD'S STORY.

"WHAT was the queerest thing I ever seed?"

We five were lounging in the little cabin after a long day's tramp over the hills; the dogs lay sprawled on the rough boards, with weary limbs toasting before the fire; and the smoke from our pipes was poisoning the sweet September air with every degree of smouldering long cut, fine cut, and mixture. The guns had been cleaned and polished and put away; the shells were loaded for the morrow; and we four delegates from civilization had been whiling away the last drowsy hour before rolling up in our blankets by the recital of adventures real or imagined—such tales as hunters love to tell and other hunters love to listen to. Then the doctor, with a sly wink at the rest that signified something of interest, had called upon our guide, old, grizzled Asa Fleetwood, for his contribution to the marvellous.

"I dunno if I kin give you anything that'll strike you, gentlemen, as worth the hearing on. I've seed some strange things out yere in this lonesomeness—yes, and been in 'em too; but I can't tell you of no sich things as you've been telling on—no deers killed with popguns"—Asa's disrespectful name for our silver-trimmed revolvers—"nor no wild hosses ketched by salting of their tails"—and the old fellow grinned at his own joke—"but I kin tell you jest a plain, every-day story of something I seed onct, that I'll never forget—not to my last minute on this earth."

He paused, with a "by your leave," to fill his corn-

cob from the nearest box, and tapping the "bright Virginia" into the bowl, looked around at the faces silhouetted against the fire, pulled a moment at the pipe to get it well alight, settled himself back into a more comfortable position, and began his story:

"About the time I first located in these parts, when deer and b'ar, and wolves and game was plenty, and everything a feller needs to be had for the taking on it, along over the trail one day, pack on back and a whole gun-shop of wepins stuck on all over him, kinder singing softly to hisself as he walks, up comes a little chap what says to me: 'Howdy, stranger,' allows as how his name was Marlow—Jim Marlow—claps hisself down by my fire like as if he was coming to a party, and jest makes hisself to home. He weren't much to look at; jest an ornary, homely little cuss, but clear grit and a heart o' gold, as I found out arterwards. Well, I won't bother you with telling how it come about, but anyway, we become pardners, Jim Marlow and me, and worked our traps in cahoots, and took turns at the cooking and dish-washing. Oh, you needn't laugh, we washed 'em all right when we wasn't in too much on a hurry.

"Bimeby—maybe two weeks, maybe more—he lets on as how he has another pard in the East, a-following him on the trail; and if I ain't onconvenient—which I wasn't noways—he'd be glad to have him kinder join in and be one of us. And I allowed the woods was big enough for three, and anybody as Jim had tied to would go all right with Asa Fleetwood. And sure enough, afore the month was cut, along he comes jest of a nightfall, a-leading of one hoss and a-riding of another; and when he sees our camp smoke, out he lets a great 'halloo' that sets the woods a-ringing, and when Jim hears that, up he jumps and tears away down the hill like mad; and this other, he off his hoss and runs to Jim; and sich a shaking of hands and clapping each other on the back I never did see in all my days! Well, presently along they come up the hill, and Jim allows as how I was Asa, and this other, he was Rube;

and we onpacks his hoss, and stows his kit comfortable-like, and inside of two days we might ha' been three brothers, Reuben Wethersbee, Jim Marlow, and me, so snug and smooth everything was a-running.

"And one day, along in the fall, and the leaves turning brown and some on 'em red on the trees, and the squirrels a-lining up their winter nests with acorns and a-chirp-chirping all the day long, and the chick-patridges a-skurrying arter the old birds pretty nigh under your very feet—which I s'pose made him think of his own little chicks—Rube says: 'Boys, this yere thing is gelorious, and I don't want nothing better than for to spend my days right out yere along o' you and in this yere clearing.' And we was agreeable, sure enough, and he goes on to say as how he'd a mind to build hisself a little home and slick everything up fine, and when he got her done, why he'd send away to the States for his wife and little ones. Well, sirs, that thing give me a kind of turn, for let alone the building of a house out thar in the woods, and a rough feller like me a-sleeping anywhere but out o' doors like I'd been used to, I weren't much on a hand for women folks noways. But when I looks at Reuben, and sees his face all lit up and the tears a-shining in his eyes, I jest gives in right thar, and lets on as how this yere thing was downright mostly needful for to perfectify our little camp.

"And every spare minute arter that we was a-working on the little house and a-widening out the clearing. And sich a chopping down of trees, and sich a hauling of 'em yere and a histing of 'em thar, you never hearn tell on. And bimeby she begins to look like a house; and Jim Marlow and Rube and me was a-riding over to the settlement, twenty mile away, and a-swopping pelts and sich for doors and windys, and pots and kettles and fixings; and a-toting 'em back over the hills, and a-bumping 'em agin the trees, and a-yanking 'em through the brush till it was a wonder we didn't smash the whole outfit.

"And all this while we was a-guessing, Jim and me, how he was a-going to let 'em know about it, away off

thar in the States, for, bar making a good black mark on a paper when we took up the land, we was no scholars, neither on us, nor had no book-larning, though I've picked up maybe a smattering since. And we knowed a whole wilderness of them little black crosses wouldn't tell her nothing of the little house, nor of Jim Marlow nor me, nor how to get whar we was, unless she was to take 'em for blaze marks on the trees. You see I was dreadful ignorant in them days. But Reuben, he was eddicated, and when the time comes, out he gets a bit of board by the firelight, and a piece of paper, and a thing he calls a envyloop, or some sich name, with a little pictur pasted in the corner, all handsome and convenient, and he falls to a-writing of his letter; and Jim and me, we helps with our idees quite promiskyous, and when at last he gets her done, and folded up, and sticks her in the envyloop, all hands takes a lick to wet the gum, and seal her up, so to say, the whole on us, this yere invitation was our sentiments. Then we gives three cheers for the little house and for the little fambily a-coming out to live in it, jest for luck and good feeling, you know, and next morning Reuben rides away over the trail to ketch the Wednesday stage for the East and post his letter.

"Well, about a month arterwards—and Rube a-riding in to the settlement every time the stage comes through, to get his answer—one night, back he comes a-whooping, and a-letting out halloos and hollerings for very joy; and when he comes in sight o' us, he waves a little white thing in the air; and then we see he'd got his letter. But we had a time a-reading on it, for it's a durn sight easier for to write a letter—what we said ourselves—than to read a letter—what other folks said! And Jim and me a-helping all we could, and a-looking at it wrong side up, and hind side afore—I knows better nowadays—and a-searching for crosses, which thar wasn't nary one in the whole letter, and all on us mostly skipping the long words; anyway, we made out the sense of it, and she was a-coming, she and the little ones, in the next stage to foller.

"Well, I don't s'pose you ever see sich fools as we was, a-trimming up that cabin in and out with spruce boughs, and a-nailing up shelves and women's fixings; and it was jest hammer, hammer, hammer, all the day long, and pretty much all the night, too, and then up and at it agin in the morning, till our fingers was that sore with missing the nail-heads and a-pounding of ourselves—and the cabin, that stuck full of nails, I don't believe you could ha' clapped a squirrel-skin up anywhars without you'd touch a dozen on 'em.

"And when the time comes nigh and the hours was getting shorter, Reuben was a-running out-doors to take a look, and a-running back in-doors to take a look, and a-changing this yere and a-moving that thar, and a-fidgetting about the whole place till Jim and me was near druv wild; and we allowed if he didn't settle down somewhars like a rational critter we'd jest tack him up over the door for a deckyration, or to be the star-scrambled banner—or whatever they call it—for you see we was all a-getting kinder narvous and excited.

"And the day afore they was to come, and Rube sorter standing all by hisself and a-thinking and a-thinking, all of a sudden he says, along o' nothing: 'Boys, I—I can't go down thar in the settlement and meet 'em first—afore all those folks—I—jest can't do it. Why, I about know I'd make a varmint of myself, a-hugging and a-kissing 'em, and like as not I'd go to crying and disgrace 'em—when I sets eyes on them babies!' And Jim and me, we sees his heart was in it, so Jim, as knowed 'em anyway, why he allowed he'd go down and meet 'em at the stage, and borry a wagon, and bring 'em out as far as the trail would let a wagon come. And Reuben and me was to walk over and meet 'em at the big divide, jest where the trail dips down into the ford and then falls a zig-zagging up the foot-hills. For you see when you gets atop of them hills, the trail was fair and straight for quite a piece, and we could see 'em coming a long ways off. And so we fixed it.

"And that night the snow come, and in the morning it was a-lying soft and white all over the trees and over

the trail, and everything jest a-shining in the sun, sorter joyful-like. And Jim, he says as how we needn't be surprised to see him coming back a-sledding, and if thar was any jingle-bells in the place, why he would have 'em. And he rides away on the old roan hoss, a-leading of the bay, and both on 'em a-swish-swashing through the snow, and we a-dancing and a-shouting on the hill to keep him company as long as he could hear, jest like two children.

"Well, sirs, thar was more come with that snow than we first thought on; for along about two o'clock, jest arter we'd lit the first fire in the fireplace, and was a-standing out-o'-doors to see the smoke pour out the chimbley, we hears a howl—and then another—long and shrill and dismal-like. And Rube turns pretty nigh as white as the snow thar, and jest says one word: 'Wolves!' Now a wolf ain't no great critter for a man what's well and strong and got a gun, and maybe could climb a tree, to be afeard on, but when he's got a wife and babies coming through the woods to meet him—and they not knowing the ways of wild things anyway—and Jim with nothing but a little popping six-shooter for to defend hisself on—then I tell you wolves is different! And every time they yelled away off thar atwixt us and the settlement, some way our hearts jest clim' right up in our throats, and stuck thar, and we a-panting.

"Gentlemen, it takes a tidy while to tell about it, but it wasn't two shakes afore we was in the little cabin, and we grabs a gun yere and a hatchet thar, and I don't know what all, and then away we goes a-tearing down the trail, teeth shet hard, and narves and muscles braced for a long race over the white snow. And all the while that wild howling a-getting nearer, and a-getting nearer, and the cold chills a-creeping up my back and a-shooting down agin, and the agony in Reuben's face a-deepening, ever' time we hears that distant yell.

"The good Lord only knows how we got thar, so scared and tremblyous and all onfit for running as we was, but anyway we reached the last hill over the ford,

and jest as we was a-going to plunge down the trail, Rube stops short and throws up one hand, and says with his lips as plain as though he'd said it with his voice—for we had no breath left for talking with—'Listen!' And sure enough, away off thar we hears, faint and distant-like, a little 'crack!'—and then another and another—six of 'em—about as loud as snapping of a little twig. But we knowed what it meant: it was Jim's six-shooter a-speaking bravely for the wife and little ones, a-coming on the trail.

"Then down we goes over the hill, and splash, splash, into the ford, up to our knees, up to our waists, up to our arm-pits in the icy water—but a-holding our arms up high and a-keeping our guns and amynition dry for to do death on them yelping devils! And when we gets atop of the hill, we hears 'em coming 'round the bend, the little gun a going zip-bang—agin—six times; and then a little space for him to load, and then onct more, six times. And all the while the wolves a-keeping up that yell, howl and yell agin—that turned our blood to ice; and we a-going on, a-staggering, and a-stumbling, and a-straining of our ears to listen.

"And jest then they comes in sight, a good mile away, but seeming almost nigh enough to touch 'em in the cold, clear air—the hosses all alash, the low sled a-bumping on the fallen logs, Jim a-standing up and laying on the whip—and every little while a-throwing back his arm—and then would come a little puff of smoke—and then we'd hear the piff-bang a-floating on the air; and in the sled, all of a huddle on the floor, a little tumbling, bouncing heap we knowed was Rube's wife and babies. And Reuben gives a awful groan, and stops, and throws up both arms, dead-beat and all unnarved, and looks at me appealing-like, but I could only shake my head, and drag him on. I knowed they'd never make it to get in shot of us the way it looked, afore the wolves would be upon 'em; for they was gaining now—and coming up with every stride—and we so helpless.

"And jest then Jim fires two shots, snap-bang, at a

wolf as was a-getting up abreast of him, but only twice, and part of the pack stops and pitches on this dying one; but the rest keeps on, and Jim flings something bright and shiny in the sun squat in the face of one a-coming up on t'other side; and then we see his last shot was gone, and he'd throwed away his wepin—for every pound counted. Then presently, out goes the buffalo-skin—and then something else; and each time the pack stops, and some on 'em rolls over and goes heels up in the sudden check, and back agin and take a sniff, and when they finds their bite don't draw the blood, then hark back arter the chase, and a-getting nearer, nearer all the while.

"And now we kin see Jim's white face, kin hear him shouting to the hosses, and shouting curses at the wolves a-gaining grim and deadly—and Rube kneels down and throws up the barrel of his rifle—but drops it quick agin and gives a moan; he darsen't fire for fear he'd hit something else, dearer a thousand times than his own body.

"And then it was, gentlemen, I seed the strangest, queerest thing I ever see in all my living days: for Jim, he sees he'd never win the race with all on 'em, and he jest up and stands on the seat, sharp and clear against the white sky, gives the hosses a last clip with the lash, kinder kisses his hand to the sunshine he never was to see agin, whips off his hat, and waves it—jest like this—twice or maybe thrice around his head, gives us a ringing cheer across the snow, and turns and vaults back among those yelping, shrieking devils. They climb on him and tear at him; he fights 'em with his bare hands, strikes 'em with his clinched fists, and jest then, while we was glaring at it all, so helpless and so hopeless, along comes the panting horses, and kinder slows up.

"Some way or other I bundle Reuben in and he grabs the reins, flings me his gun and cartridge-belt, and then away, away with the wife and babies for the home on the distant hills, while I goes rushing back, shouting, screaming, cursing—with sich awful curses as I

knowed God never heard afore; but too late! I never seed dear, old, trusty, homely Jim agin; never heard his bonny voice arter that one cheer; jest seed a shapeless something on the bloody snow, heard them devils a-crunch-crunching that I hear agin in dreams until this day. Then all the snow and trees and hills and sky turns kinder black afore my eyes—I gives one yell to Jim that I'm a-coming—and knows no more until I finds myself, knife in one hand and hatchet in the other, a-hacking and a-stabbing and a-chopping those hounds of hell—shouting, drenched with blood—theirs, and his, and mine.

"But I'm alive to tell on it; and—gentlemen, not one of them devils ever sniffed the air of morning. And—Jim—don't mind an old fool's tears—I—I've seed the winter snows fall soft and white this twenty year upon the little pile of stones that marks the spot; but Jim don't need no monument, for in our hearts he's living still—and loved—and unforgotten."

This story is another reminder that "the apostles" didn't "go around in swallow-tailed coats." It was written by R. L. Ketchum, and is republished from *The Argonaut*.

"EVANGELIST BRICK."

Away up there in the mountains, at H——, our sources of spiritual enlightenment were very limited indeed. In the first place, we were so far away from civilization that it is more than probable that not one missionary in two dozen knew of our existence. Secondly, as there were no ladies in H——, and hence no sewing-circles, ministers who craved society of a more refined sort than that of Sam Hiles' poker-room were inclined to fight shy of us.

Once or twice, to be sure, we had had, for a brief period in each instance, a minister all to ourselves. The first one was a brand-new, very zealous, weak-eyed, scholarly, studious, and shy young man, with a Bostonese method of handling the king's English. But this one was not happy. He might have been a star of the first magnitude at a ladies' Browning club, but at H—— he was as much out of place as the proverbial cat in a strange garret. He seemed to care little for the society of his fellow-beings, at least those in H——. The boys tried to make him feel at home, and every once in a while some one would ask him to drink, but he never did. So it came to pass that his life grew burdensome, because the boys called him "Sis," and paid about as much attention to him as if he had been a tailor's dummy. But when Hill Tobias, the big, kindly wit of the camp, on hearing the reverend cough one day, said: "Sonny, ye've got th' croup, an' ef I wuz you I'd go right back ter my folks," it settled "Rev. Sis," and next day he took the stage back to civilization.

The other one was not with us even as long as "Sis." He came a month after "Sis" left, and stayed about

three weeks. He was a big, overfed, canting sort of a chap, and talked "shop" too much out of business hours. One morning something broke about the engine at the Highland Mine, and Wallace, the manager, used cuss words right in the presence of Rev. Obadiah Sweet, who then and there began—just began—a long discourse on swearing, by way of reproof. I only heard one side of the story, and that was Wallace's version. It seems that he took Rev. Sweet by the shoulders, abused him roundly as a wolf in sheep's attire, and smote him with more or less violence with the toe of his miner's boot. And Rev. Sweet walked ten miles down to Redwood to wait for the stage.

One day, however, a *man*, an evangelist, came and stayed a week; and in H—— society were wrought great changes—most notable of which was the conversion of Brick Yates, one of the toughest, most profane, godless men in H——. It was the fourth or fifth night of the evangelist's stay. He had exhorted as only a true man, with his heart in his work, can; and finally asked all those who wanted to become Christians to come forward and take a front seat.

There was a moment's silence. Then arose Brick Yates, who had at first done all he could to hinder the work, and his great voice growled: "Damme, I'll jest go ye!" And he went up followed by a dozen "bad" ones.

The next night a contingent from Redwood came up and invaded the sanctuary. They were all tough, but behaved pretty well until they discovered that they were getting very dry. Then, in the most earnest part of Rev. Haywood's discourse, they rose and started to march over to Hiles'. Mr. Haywood stopped speaking and looked at them in mute appeal, but Brick was equal to the emergency. As the Redwood crowd came clumping to the door, he rose, and in a hoarse whisper, heard by every one, exclaimed: "Here! Whatinell d'you fellers mean by disturbin' these here perceedin's? Go back an' set down till th' rev'ren' gits through. Plenty time ter drink. Hear me?"

They heard, and went back to their seats, and every one of them put five dollars into the hat.

Henceforth, Brick was H——'s sole spiritual physician. He was also doctor, nurse, and general consoler to all the rough population of the camp. At the start, though he did not stop taking an occasional drink, he quit gambling and getting drunk and gradually broke himself of using strong cuss words, though a few of the milder ones he never did get rid of. At first, a few unconverted ones made fun of him, but he always took it good-naturedly, and they, seeing he was in earnest, soon let him alone.

When a chap called "Charley Ross" in some unaccountable way held four kings in a little game wherein another king was held by Buck Penrose, and lingered for five or six days afterward with a 44-bullet inside of him, Brick Yates was the one who picked him up, carried him home, and nursed him tenderly till he died; and Brick it was who performed the last rites, preaching a brief but forcible homily on the advantages of strict honesty.

When little Sherburne, assayer at the Highland, was sick with mountain fever, it was Brick who stopped work and stayed by his bedside three weeks, and who took the lad's body to Leadville and shipped it home. And when George Hawley, who had been Brick's enemy for years, hovered between life and death for ten days, as the result of an accident at the Columbia shafthouse, it was Yates who nursed him and brought him back from the jaws of death, a bit crippled, but strong enough to work and grateful almost to worship.

But the English company operating the Highland Mine shipped in, one day, a lot of Cornish miners—rough, brutish, ignorant fellows, far different from the splendid boys whom the crazy freaks of the manager who succeeded Wallace had forced to quit work. From this time on, Brick's work was hard, but he never faltered. All the old residents were his stanch friends, but with these loutish Cornishmen he could establish no peace, though he did all for them that he would

have done for others. They had no gratitude, no finer feelings; and though Brick used every effort to establish friendly relations with them, it was in vain.

One Saturday night there was trouble at the Highland, and Peveril, the new manager, was killed by the men and his body thrown into a gully. The word passed into the camp and Brick heard. He had known and disliked Peveril, as had every one else in camp, but his duty was clear. He saddled his bronco and rode up and got the body.

Next day we gathered down at the little cemetery to see Peveril consigned to earth. Brick had begun to read a chapter of the Good Book over the grave, when there was a commotion, and he looked up to see what was the matter. Four or five drunken Cornishmen, the worst characters at the Highland, came through the crowd, headed by Evan Evans, the leader of the last night's riot. They stalked up to Brick, but he continued his reading. Evans raised his big, dirty hand and struck the Bible from Yates' grasp. A dozen hands reached for revolvers, but Brick raised his hand as a command to refrain.

"Evans," he said slowly, "you are interferin' wi' th' work of God, but let us have no words. Cease this here trouble, an' go yer way. I'm goin' ter bury this here feller ef I die fer it." And he again reached for the Bible, but had hardly taken hold of it, when Evans raised his heavy boot and kicked the preacher's lowered arm. Like a flash of lightning, Brick's hand flew to his revolver—there was a report, and Evans lay on the ground dead, the blood gushing from a gaping hole over his eye.

Brick was very pale as, the other Cornishmen having been forced by the crowd to take their dead leader and leave, he continued the service.

When he had finished, he looked around and said quietly: "Fr'en's, I'm sorry, but thar sh'd be no interferin' with sech matters. Tell them chaps I'll preach the service over Evans, ef they say so."

That night a shot was fired from the dark alley next

to Jake Smith's saloon, and we boys, rushing out, found Brick, a wound in his chest, dying on the side-walk.

As we carried him in and laid him on the bar-tender's cot, he signed to me to bend closer, and whispered: "Billy, ole boy, they've got me. I guess th' Lord wuz on my side, but nuther me n'r Him seen that skulkin' cuss in th' alley."

Ministers have come and gone at H—— since then. They have been scholarly and refined, ignorant and rough, good and indifferent; and some of them have endeared themselves to the people of H——, now quite a city. But it is worth while, when some one is extolling the virtues of this or that good man, to hear some old-timer say: "Wa-al, mebbe so. But you jest oughter hev knowed Brick Yates. Thar *wuz* a man."